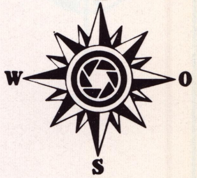
An Illustrated Guidebook

TRANSCAUCASIA

tourist Attractions in ARMENIA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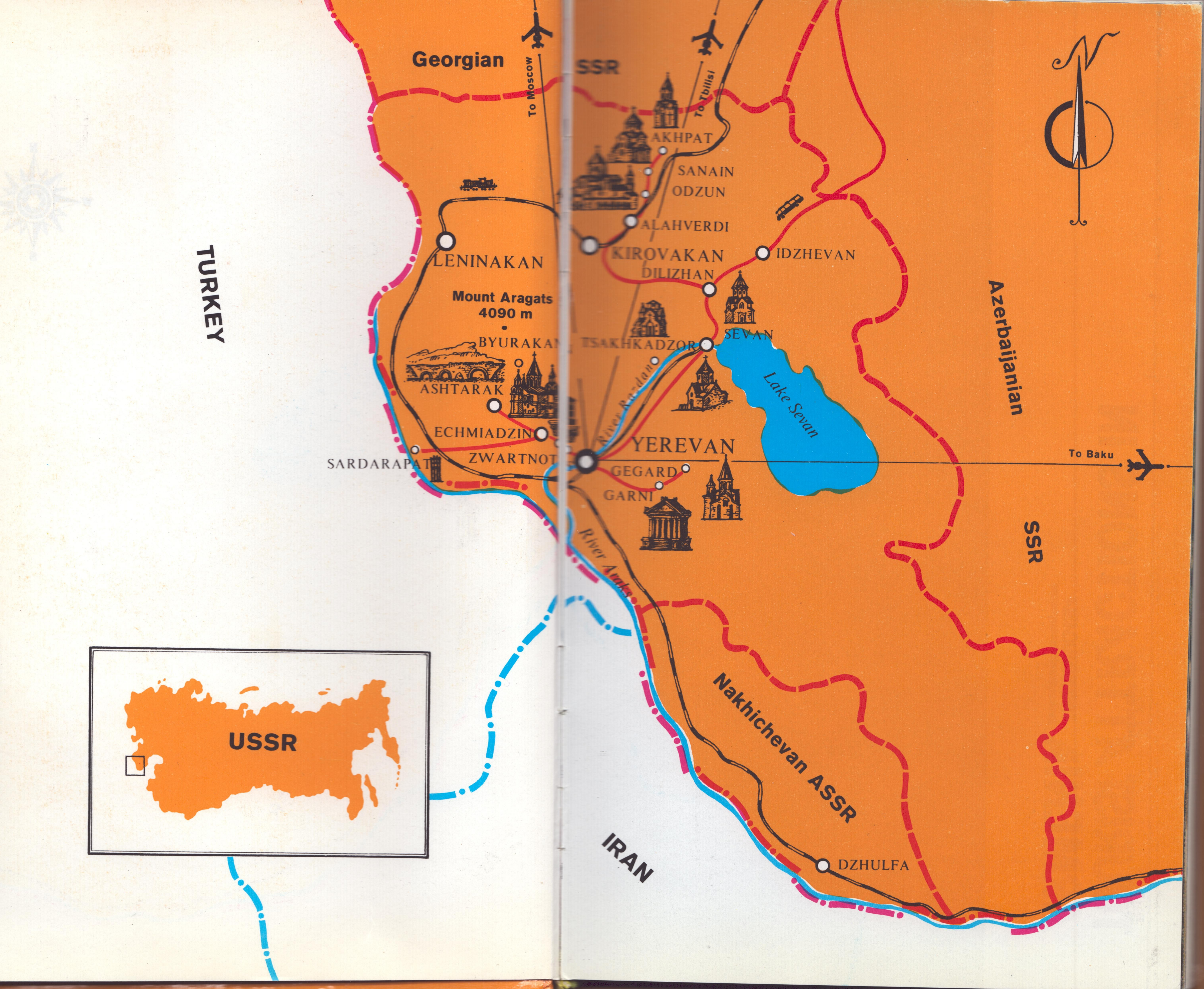
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA


Georgian SSR
To Moscow
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Mount Aragats
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SEVAN
Lake Sevan
River Razdan
ASHTARAK
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YEREVAN
GEGARD
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TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

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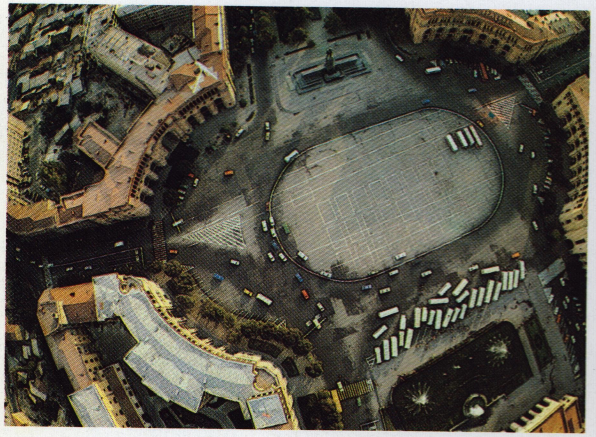

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TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

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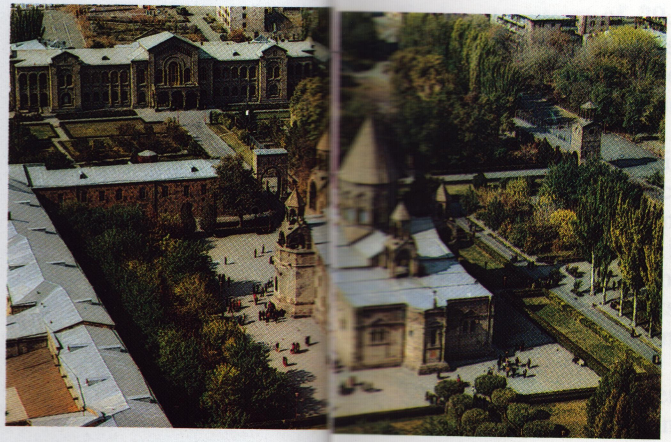

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The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic is situated in the south of Transcaucasia. To the north and east are the Georgian and the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republics, while its neighbours to the west and south are Turkey and Iran.

With a territory of 29,800 square kilometres, Armenia is the smallest of the fifteen Soviet constituent republics. It is a mere 360 kilometres long and 200 kilometres wide, with most of its territory lying 1,000 metres to 2,500 metres above sea level. Armenia's highest mountain is Aragats (4,090 metres) whose jagged summit is snow capped all year round except for a short period in late summer.

Armenia is often described as "sunny" and it is a fact that the Ararat Valley has almost as much sunshine as Egypt—2,700 hours a year. Yet, the republic's terrain is such that in winter the temperature sometimes drops to −46° C. Although it is situated on the same latitude as Spain, Italy and Greece, its **climate** ranges from dry subtropical to cold mountain weather. In the plateaus and foothills (where Yerevan is located), the climate is dry and continental with hot summers and moderately cold winters. The mean temperature in July is a steady +24° to 26° C, and −5° C in January. The best time of the year in Armenia is definitely autumn when there is a long span of clear crisp weather with rich harvests of grapes, fruits and vegetables.

Armenia has been dubbed a "geological museum" and for good reason. It has deposits of virtually all the minerals and rocks to be found in the Earth's crust—copper, molybdenum, gold, polymetallic and iron ores, etc. Add to that the curative mineral water springs of which there are about a thousand.

The numerous **rivers** of Armenia are turbulent and quite unfit for navigation, penned up as they are by steep mountain gorges. But they have great hydropower potential which has been utilized for producing electricity and for irrigation. Araks, the largest river of the Armenian Highland, has a drainage area equal to 76 per cent of the republic's territory.

More than 100 mountain lakes number in Armenia. Sevan is the world's biggest lake at an altitude of almost 2,000 metres above sea level.

Armenia's **forests** cover approximately 13 per cent of its territory and are to be found mainly in the north-east and in the Zangezur mountain country. The forests are predominantly beech, hornbeam, oak, elm, maple, plane, ash, pine and fir.

The Armenian **fauna** abounds in rare species of animals and birds. The forests are populated by roe deer, boar, Syrian bear, and lynx and by such birds as the sparrow, woodcock, robin, warbler, tomtit, and woodpecker. In the mountains one finds the mountain turkey, horned lark, and bearded vulture, while in the southern regions and on the Aragats the animal kingdom is represented by the moufflon and the bezoar goat.

Armenians constitute 89.7 per cent of the republic's **population,** and the remainder include Azerbaijanis, Russians, Kurds, Ukrainians and people of other nationalities, in all a total of 3.5 million.

Armenia—an Ancient Land. The powerful state of Urartu was founded on the Armenian Highland in the 9th century B.C. The ruins of the once impregnable fortresses along with other archaeological discoveries bear the hallmarks of a high degree of civilization.

Urartu ceased to exist in the 6th century B.C., and was succeeded by the Kingdom of Armenia which united the local tribes, including the Haiasi and Armens.

In the reign of the Artashesid (2nd-1st centuries B.C.) and the Arshakid (1st-5th centuries A.D.) dynasties, trades and handicrafts flourished in the kingdom. Its celebrated cities—Yervandashat, Armavir, Zarekhavan, Zarishat, Artashat and Dvin—served as capitals at different times.

The development of the economy, trade and handicrafts brought about a great spiritual advancement, and Armenia became the cradle of a great civilization. Its architects built marvelous structures, of which the pagan temple in Garni (1st century A.D.) is a wonderful example. The Armenian theatre dates back to about the same time.

Armenia was converted and embraced Christianity as its official state religion in 301. In 405 Mesrop Mashtots, the scholar, invented the Armenian alphabet, which is still in use today.

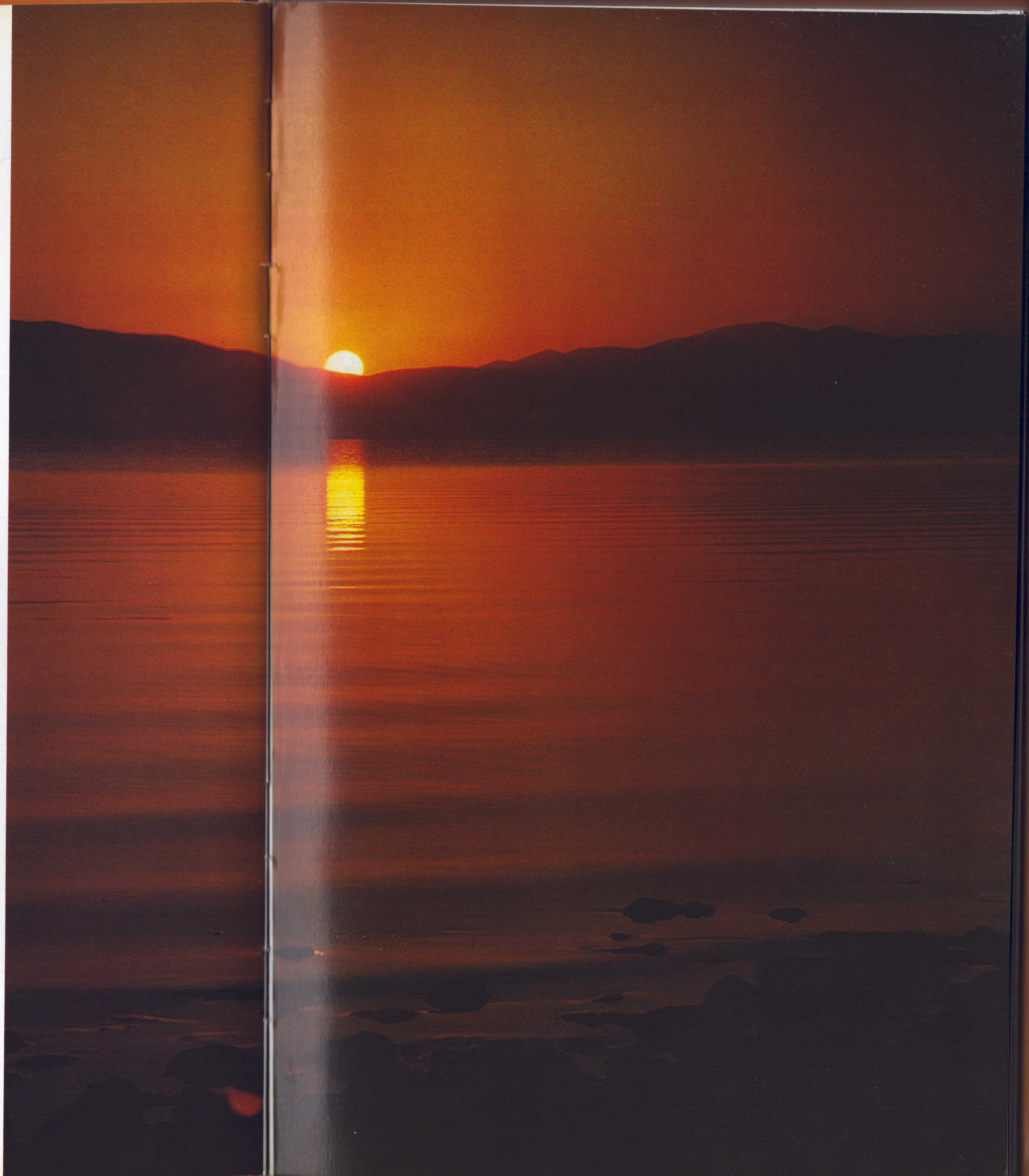
During the centuries that followed, Armenia became the arena of rivalry between the Roman Empire and Persia. It came under Arab rule in the 7th century but regained its independence in the late 9th century, when the Arab Caliphate fell into decline.

The country enjoyed a spell of relative peace and tranquility under the Bagratid Dynasty (9th-10th centuries), but not for long. In the mid-11th century, a period of strife and bloodshed set in with the invasion of the Seljuk Turks, the Mongol-Tatar conquest, and the protracted, savage wars between Persia and Turkey on Armenian soil.

In 1639, after an interminable war between Persia and Turkey, which laid waste whole regions of Armenia, an agreement was signed ceding the western part of the country to Turkey and the eastern—to Persia.

The heavy yoke of foreign invaders did not suppress the freedom-loving Armenians. Defying the genocide practised by the invaders, the Armenians retained their cultural identity, their language and their customs.

The architectural masterpieces dating back to the 7th century include the churches of Hripsime and Zwartnots; to the 10th-13th centuries—Agartsin, and the 12th-13th centuries—



the cave churches of Gegard. You will be able to see many of these historical landmarks during your tour of the republic.

Universities appeared in Armenia in the 10th-13th centuries. Ani, Gladzor and Tatev universities were the most renowned.

The people of Armenia fought bravely against their oppressors but, given the feudal division of the country, they could not hope to shake off foreign domination. In the early 17th century, progressive-minded Armenians began to pin their hopes for salvation on the powerful Christian state of Moscow.

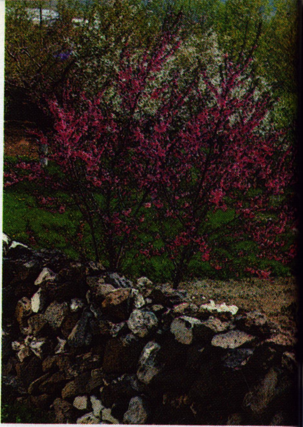
In 1826, war broke out between Russia and Persia which culminated in the signing of the Turkmanchai Treaty of 1828. Under the treaty, Eastern Armenia was incorporated into the Russian Empire.

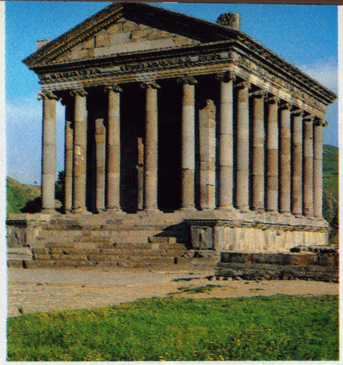
This event was a milestone for Armenia. Its people no longer had to face the threat of extermination, hostile incursions, violence, plunder and devastation.

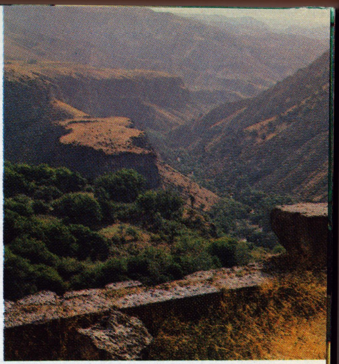
Russia was economically, socially and culturally more advanced than Persia or Turkey, and, gradually, Armenia was drawn into the capitalist economy which was developing in the Empire. It began to build cotton and silk textile mills, factories to produce footwear, wine and brandy, and trade and handicrafts flourished. Copper began to be mined in Alahverdi and Kafan. The Tiflis (now Tbilisi)—Alexandropol (now Leninakan)—Yerevan railway line was laid in 1902, promoting trade and economic ties with central Russia.

Contact with liberal thought in Russia was of tremendous significance. The works of many great Russian writers and poets, including Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, and Dostoyevsky began to be translated into Armenian in the first half of the 19th century. Russian intellectuals were also extremely interested in Armenia's ancient history and the marvelous spiritual values it had created.

During the 1860s many Armenian public figures and politicians joined the democratic revolutionary movement in Russia. Their leaders were the writer and journalist Mikael Nalbandyan (1829-66), a disciple of the Russian thinkers Chernyshevsky (1828-89) and Herzen (1812-70). Marxist ideas began to penetrate into Armenia







late in the 19th century, and the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels was translated into Armenian in 1887. The first Marxist groups formed in 1898, and the Alliance of Armenian Social Democrats was organized in 1902 which adopted Lenin's programme for fighting the autocracy.

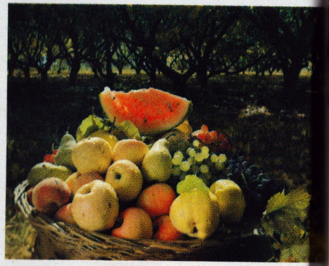
The repercussions of the First Russian Revolution (1905-07) reached the Transcaucasus in the spring and the workers and employees at several factories went on strike. In the autumn of 1905, the workers of Yerevan joined the October national political strike.

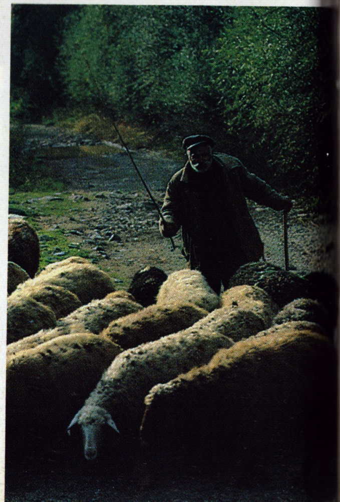
When the First World War broke out, the Bolsheviks of Armenia opposed it as imperialist, then tragedy struck in April 1915. The leaders of the Young Turk Movement invoked martial law and launched a policy of genocide. More than 1.5 million Armenians were massacred during 1915-16, more than 600,000 were deported to the Mesopotamian desert where most of them perished, and 300,000 found asylum in Russia. Those who escaped, settled in the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. The entire world was shocked, and public figures, scholars, statesmen, and celebrities took up the Armenian cause.

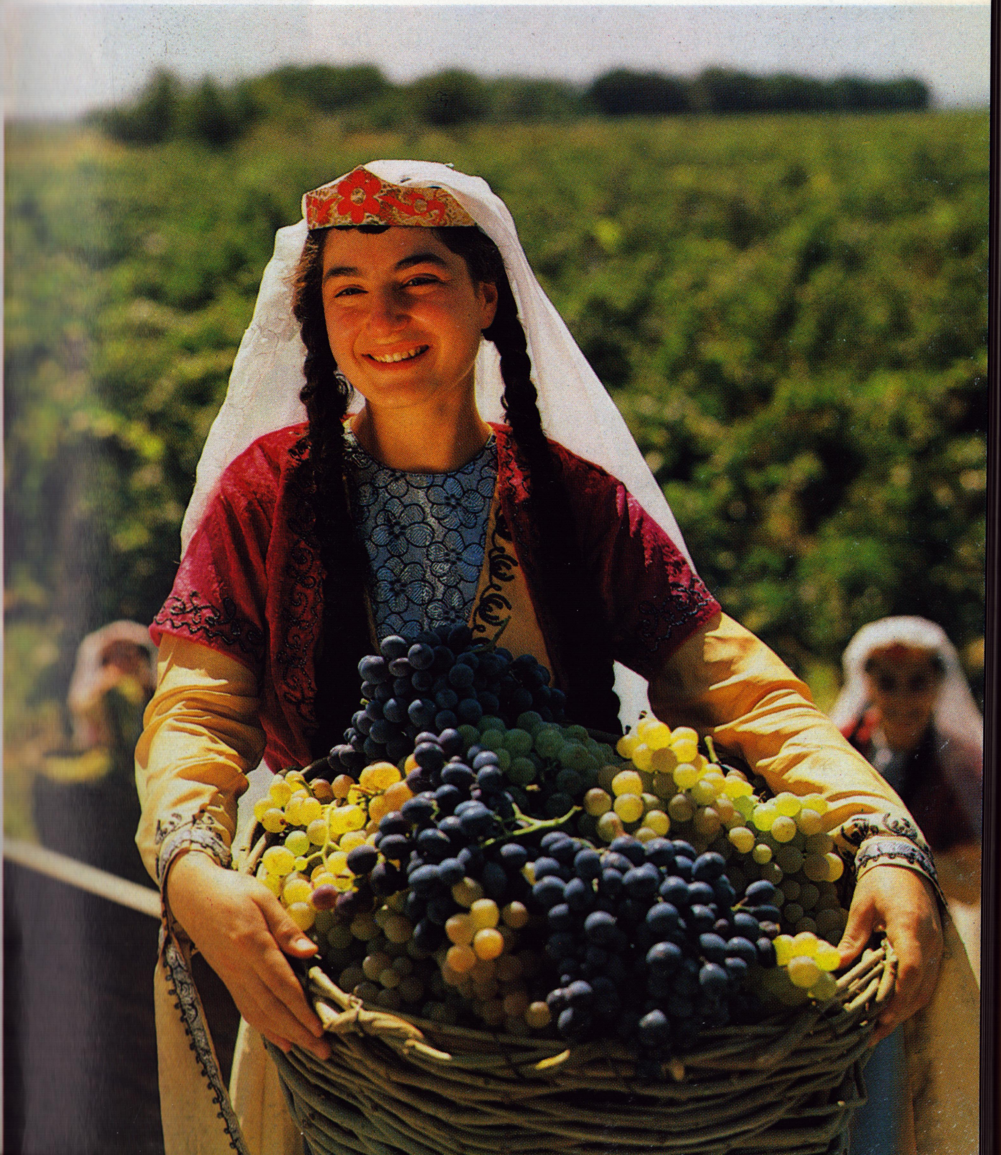
The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 put an end to the social and national oppression of the nations of Russia. But Soviet government was not established immediately in Transcaucasia due to several reasons, and the petty bourgeois nationalistic parties, supported by Great Britain, Germany and Turkey, were the first to seize power.

In 1918, the Dashnaktsutyun bourgeois nationalist party proclaimed Armenia an independent republic. Anarchy and chaos resulted. The country's weak economy collapsed, the cities were devastated, the villages—abandoned. Famine and disease took a terrible toll: one-third of the republic's population died in 1918-19.

In September 1920, Turkey started hostilities against Armenia, seizing two-thirds of its territory in a matter of days. Led by the Bolsheviks and aided by the Red Army, the people of Armenia overthrew the nationalist government on November 29, 1920, and Armenia was proclaimed a Soviet Socialist Republic.







On December 2, Vladimir Lenin, who had followed events in Transcaucasia intently, greeted the working class of Armenia "liberated from the yoke of imperialism". His message was addressed to the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Committee of Armenia, Sarkis Kasyan.

The young republic's economy was a shambles. Once again it was Soviet Russia who came to its assistance. Though ruined by the World and Civil wars, Russia sent trainloads of grain, medicine, fuel and industrial equipment to Armenia.

In a letter dated April 14, 1921 *To the Comrades of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan, and the Mountaineer Republic,* Vladimir Lenin drafted a programme of economic, political and cultural construction in the Caucasus. With the assistance of the Soviet peoples, Armenia started to build a new life.

In those days everything was being done for the very first time—the Soviets of Armenia assembled for their first congress to pass the first constitution of the young socialist republic, the country opened its first publishing house, its first state library.

On March 12, 1922, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia concluded a treaty that formed the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic which joined the USSR on December 30, 1922. In 1936 the Transcaucasian Federation was disbanded and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia became separate, constituent republics of the USSR.

In what is a short period in terms of history, Armenia's advancement was very rapid. A hinterland of the tzar's empire which used to import everything, right down to needles, Armenia built factories, electric power stations, laid irrigation canals and launched mining and chemical plants in a short period of time.

Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. More than half a million of Armenia's citizens fought at the battle fronts. For gallantry in action during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 one hundred and six Armenian officers and men were decorated with the Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union, the highest award this country can confer.

Quite a few Armenian generals helped defeat

the enemy: Marshal Ivan Bagramyan, Admiral Ivan Isakov, Marshal Amazasp Babadzhanyan, and Airforce Marshal Sergei Khudyakov (Khanferyants).

Despite wartime difficulties, Armenia continued to develop economically. The industrial facilities built during the war include an electrical power machinery works, and a tyre and a watch factory which rank among the biggest in the USSR to this very day.

Post-war Armenia boasts high development rates and new lines, such as the power engineering, machine-tool, radio-electronics, instruments and car-making industries. Today Armenia's basic industries are chemical, machine-making, food, non-ferrous metallurgy and the production of building materials.

Armenia exports 180 types of industrial goods to 70 countries.

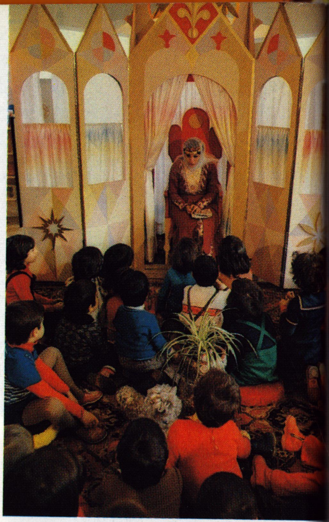
Only 15 to 20 per cent of Armenia's territory is fit for farming, mainly in the Ararat Valley, the republic's granary. Here there are vineyards and orchards, fields of grain, and vegetables, melons and watermelons,and technical cultures. Sheep grazing and cattle breeding are Armenia's speciality.

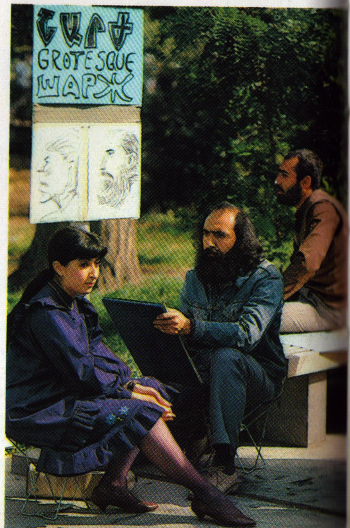
There has been a tremendous revival of the sciences in Armenia in Soviet times, but scientific institutions are a new development. Its 130 research institutes have a staff of some 22,000 researchers.

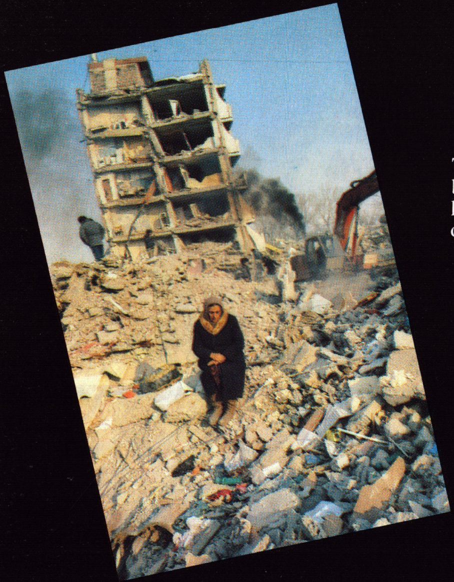
Before the Revolution, there were only seven secondary schools in the republic and the majority of the teachers were not college trained. Today Armenia has more than 1,500 general educational schools attended by 700,000 students.

Armenia is justly called a museum in the open air. This land of rocks sports many an autograph of days gone by, and there are more than 4,000 historical landmarks on its territory. Their beauty and perfection has for many centuries aroused admiration. Pagan shrines, monasteries nestling in the mountains, exquisitely carved stones with crosses on mountain roads, beautifully adorned churches—all this awaits you in Armenia.

We suggest you start your tour of the republic in Yerevan, the capital.







Building equipment and rescuers' teams were sent to the disaster area

The nine-storey apartment building where her family lived collapsed burying lots of people

Spitak, "white town" in Armenian, after the earthquake looks like a huge grey heap of debris

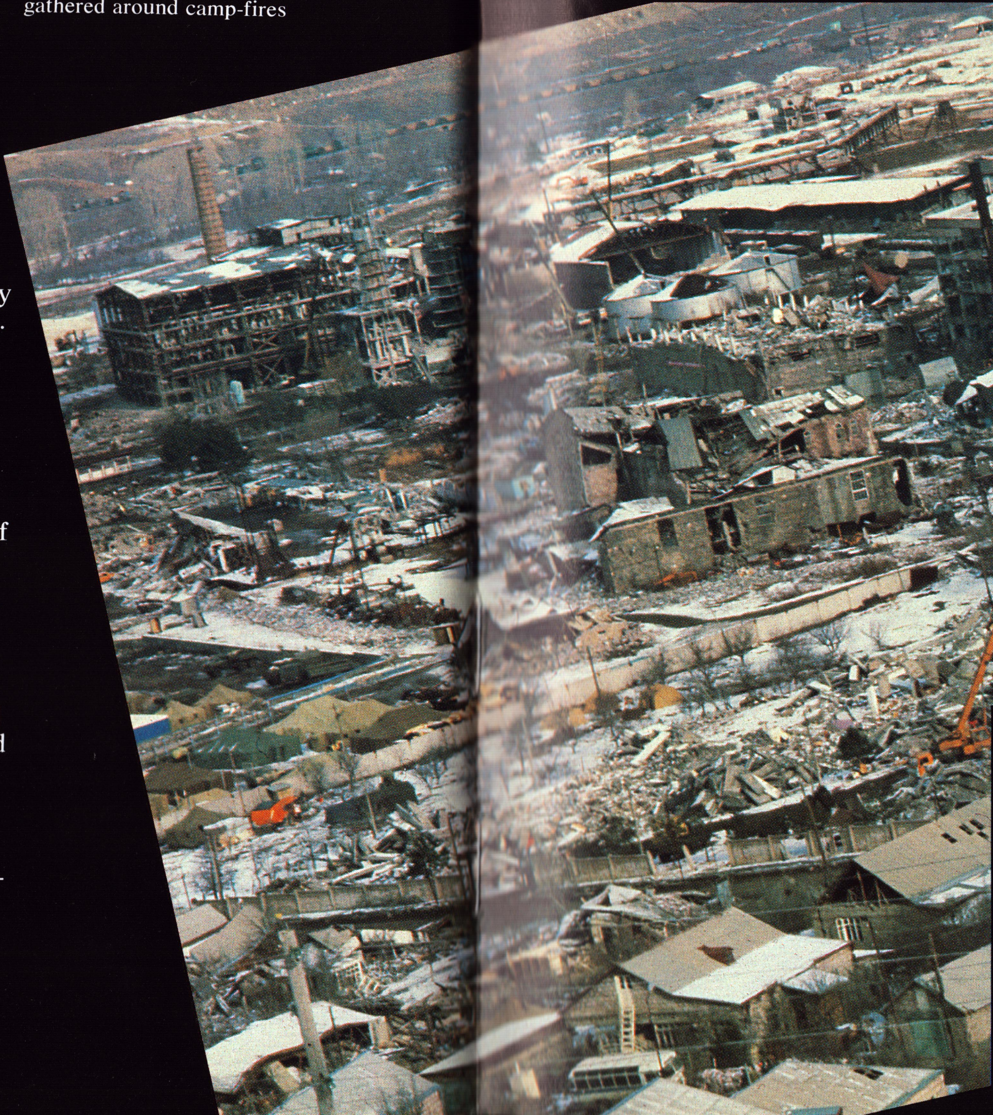
People left homeless gathered around camp-fires

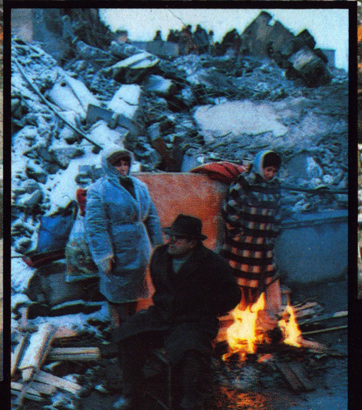
On December 7, 1988 (11:41 a. m.) Armenia's northern regions were hit by a tremendously destructive earthquake. Spitak with a 20,000 population was razed to the ground. Leninakan, the republic's second biggest city with 260,000 people, was destroyed almost completely. Many buildings in Kirovakan, Stepanavan and other towns lay in ruins. About 400 villages were demolished. Dozens of millions of people were killed and around half a million left homeless.

All regions and republics of the Soviet Union took the disaster very close to heart. Rescuers' teams, doctors and experts rushed to the disaster area. Foodstuffs, clothes, medicines, as well as medical and building equipment, and transport vehicles were sent to Armenia.

Armenia received emergent aid from the International Red Cross Society, governmental, public and charity organizations, as well as from individuals from 120 countries.

The Soviet Government is taking all necessary measures to completely restore the cities and villages hit by the quake.





YEREVAN, THE CAPITAL OF ARMENIA

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

Monuments

1 Monument to Vladimir Lenin
2 Monument to Stepan Shahumyan
3 Monument to Alexander Myasnikyan
4 *Mother Armenia* monument and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
5 Memorial to the Victims of the Genocide of 1915
6 Monument to Alexander Tamanyan
7 Monument to Khachatur Abovyan
8 Monument to Gukas Gukasyan
9 Monument to Sayat-Nova
10 Monument to Avetik Isaakyan
11 Monument to Ovanes Tumanyan
12 Monument to Alexander Spendiarov
13 Monument to Mikael Nalbandyan
14 Monument to Vardan Mamikonyan
15 Monument to David of Sasun (Sasunsky)

Monuments Commemorating Revolutionary Events

1 Monument to the establishment of Soviet government in Armenia
2 The Eternal Flame to commemorate those who fell for Soviet power in Armenia

Architectural Landmarks

1 *Hands* monument presented to Yerevan by the city of Carrara, Italy
2 Erebuni Fortress

Museums

1 Museum of the History of Armenia
2 Museum of the Revolution of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic
3 The Art Gallery of Armenia

Matenadaran

Theatres

1 The Spendiarov Opera House
2 The Sundukyan Drama Theatre
3 The Stanislavsky Russian Drama Theatre
4 The Yerevan Drama Theatre
5 The Young Spectator's Theatre

Sports Facilities

1 The *Razdan* Central Stadium
2 The *Respublikansky* Stadium
3 The Sports and Concert Complex

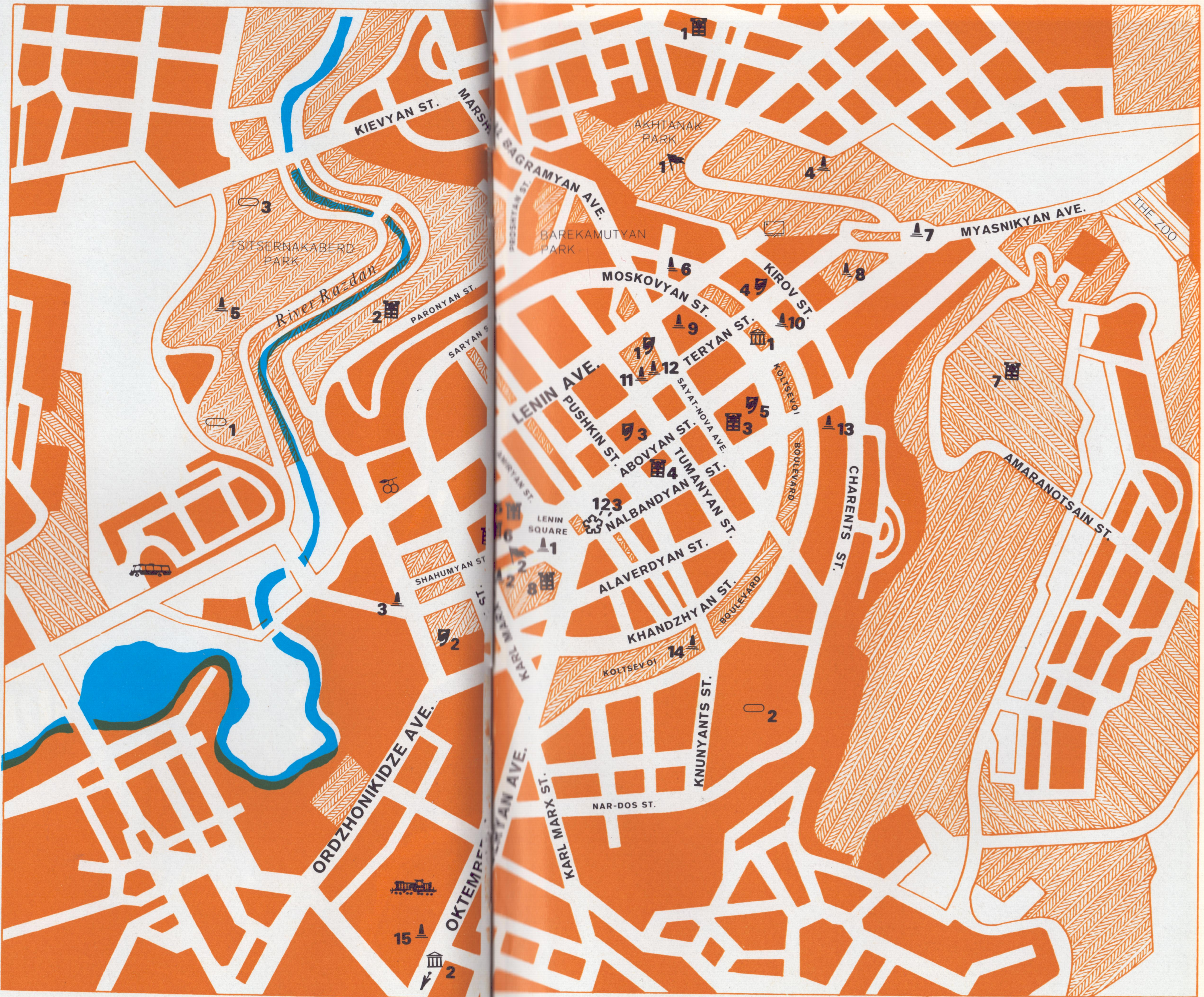
Hotels

1 *Arabkir*
2 *Dvin*
3 *Ani*
4 *Yerevan*
5 *Armenia*
6 *Sevan*
7 *Nairi*
8 *Erebuni*

The Central Market

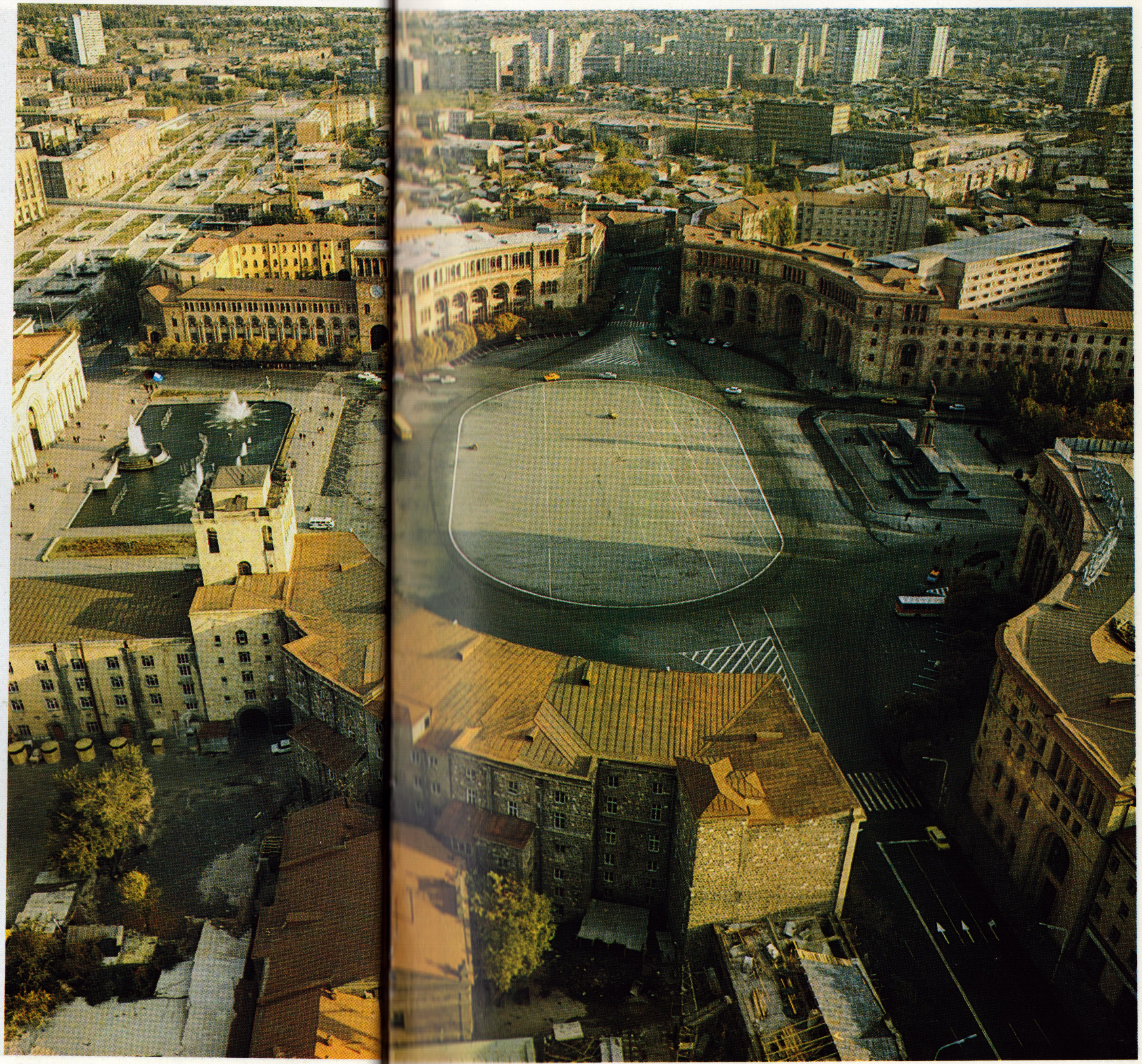
The Railway Terminus

The Bus Terminal


KIEVYAN ST.
MARSHAL BAGRAMYAN AVE.
AKHTANAK PARK
TSITSERNAKABERD PARK
River Razdan
PARONYAN ST.
SARYAN ST.
PROSHYAN ST.
BAREKAMUTYAN PARK
MOSKOVYAN ST.
MYASNIKYAN AVE.
THE ZOO
KIROV ST.
TERYAN ST.
LENIN AVE.
PUSHKIN ST.
SAYAT-NOVA AVE.
KOLTSEVOI
ABOVYAN ST.
TUMANYAN ST.
NALBANDYAN ST.
BOULEVARD
CHARENTS ST.
AMARANOTSAIN ST.
AMIRYAN ST.
LENIN SQUARE
ALAVERDYAN ST.
SHAHUMYAN ST.
KHANDZHYAN ST.
BOULEVARD
KOLTSEVOI
KARL MARX ST.
KNUNYANTS ST.
NAR-DOS ST.
ORDZHONIKIDZE AVE.
OKTEMBERYAN AVE.
KARL MARX ST.

Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, is set among mountains at an altitude of 950 to 1,200 metres above sea level on the river Razdan. The river takes its source in Lake Sevan, 50 kilometres from Mt. Ararat of Biblical fame. Its majestic peak and the rolling Ararat Valley are very much a part of Yerevan's cityscape.

Yerevan is one of the oldest cities in the world. There were many theories, conjectures and out-and-out legends which speculated on its origin, till a basalt slab, discovered by archaeologists on Arin-Berd Hill in 1950, provided documentary evidence of the date the city was founded. When the Urartu cuneiform characters on the slab were deciphered, the world learned that King Argistis I of Urartu built a fortress "...to enhance the might of the land of Biainos and to intimidate hostile countries ... in the year 782 B.C.". The fortress was named Erebuni. Linguists have proved that "Erebuni" was gradually transformed into "Yerevan".



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Yerevan in the morning

Lenin Square

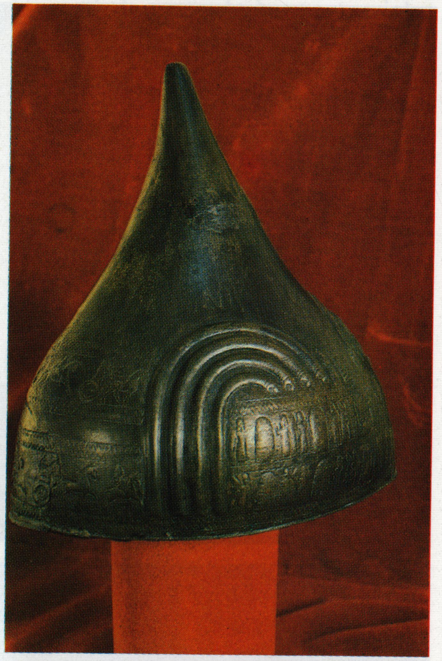
From its inception, Yerevan shared the destiny of its people.
Chronicles first mention Yerevan in the 7th century, shortly before Armenia was invaded by the Arabs. The subsequent two centuries of Arab rule were an unbearable burden on the people and disastrous for the country's development.
Armenian annalists described Yerevan as a rural town whose inhabitants tended orchards and engaged in handicrafts and trade. Then in the 12th and early 13th centuries, it rose to prominence as a trading centre linked with Ani, the then capital of Armenia. The city's growth was cut short by the Mongol-Tatar invasion.
During its history Yerevan was invaded and pillaged many times. For more than 200 years, from the 15th century, it was the battleground for an ongoing war between Persia and Turkey.
According to chronicles, Yerevan passed from one belligerent to the other 14 times serving, in turn, as the residence of the sirdars of Persia and the Turkish pashas.
In 1639, the belligerents concluded a treaty ceding Eastern Armenia, where Yerevan is located, to Persia. In 1735 the city became the centre of the Yerevan Khanate, a vassal of Persia administered by a sirdar, an absolute ruler appointed by the Shah.
The people of Yerevan and the entire khanate were taxed mercilessly to support the dazzling court of the sirdar, his officials and soldiers. The penalty for a minor wrongdoing was torture and death.
Nevertheless, trade began to pick up gradually and so did the handicrafts. Goods from Yerevan began to appear in Tiflis (now Tbilisi), the capital of neighbouring Georgia, in Shemaha and Gyanja in Azerbaijan and in markets in Asia Minor.

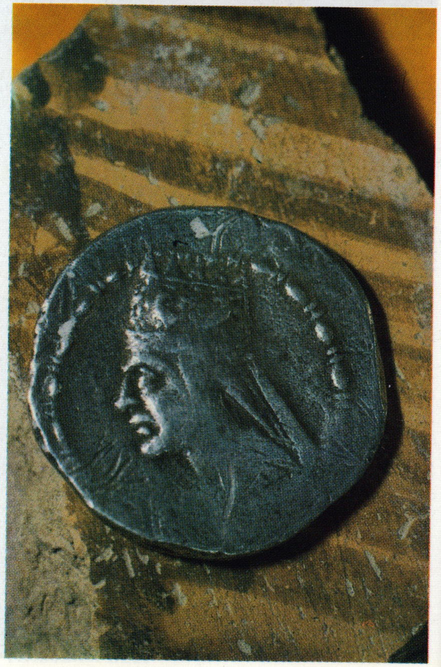
Monument to Lenin

Fountains in Lenin Square

Hotel *Armenia, left,* and the administrative building housing the State Committee for Agricultural and Related Industries of the Armenian SSR

After the Turkmanchai Treaty was signed in 1828 and Eastern Armenia became part of the Russian Empire, Yerevan, the administrative centre of the territory, had 1,730 houses, 7 churches, 8 mosques, 7 inns, 850 shops and a population of 11,463. In 1849 Yerevan was granted the status of the administrative centre of Yerevan Province, which promoted its economic and cultural standing. In 1837 a theological college opened in Yerevan, and in 1850—a school for girls. In 1864, telegraph communications were established with Tiflis and, a year later, the construction of the Yerevan-Tiflis motorway began. Yerevan's first printing plant appeared in 1874. In 1881, two more educational institutions—a high school and a teachers' training college—were built, and in 1888—its first municipal hospital.



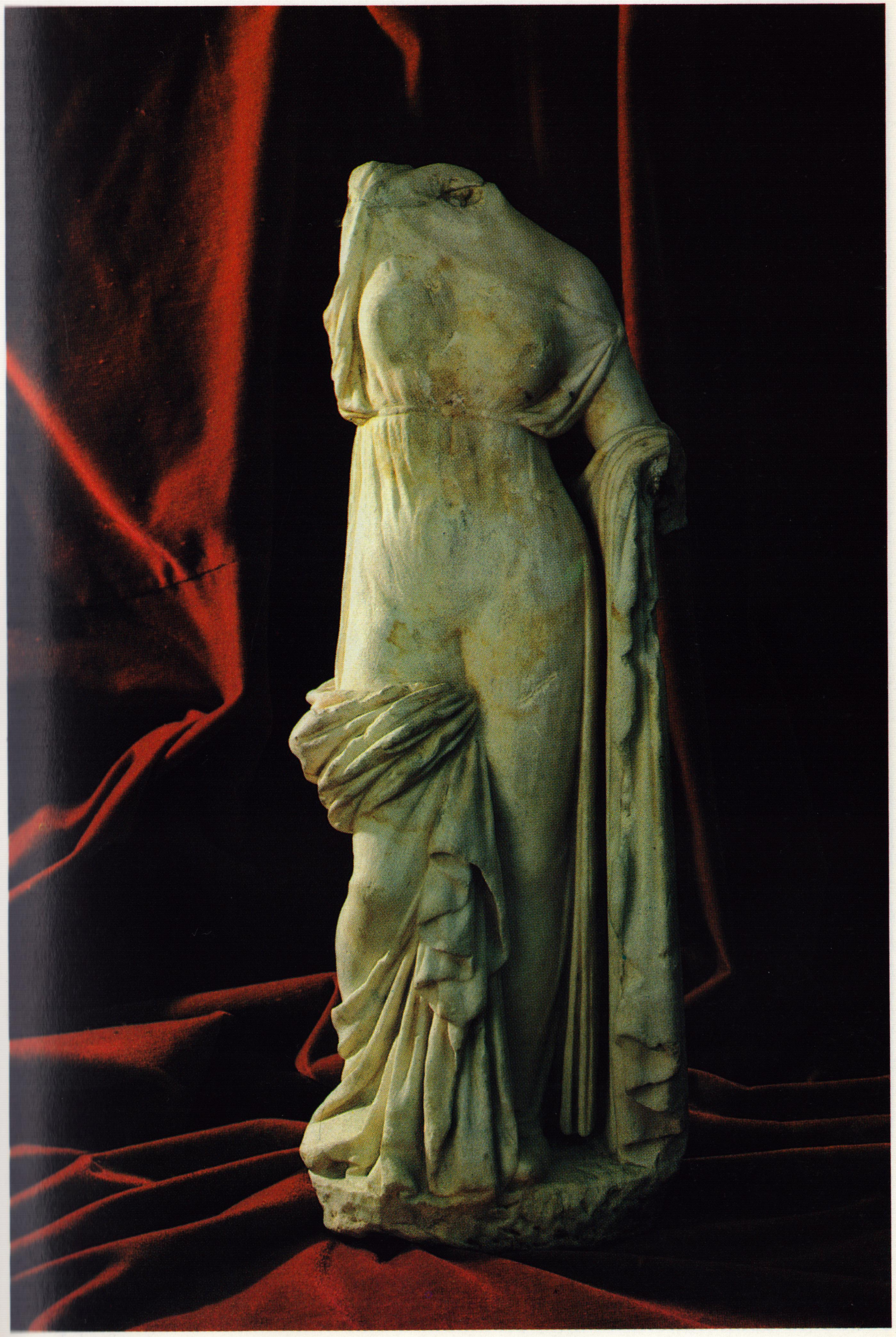


Museum of the History of Armenia

Helmet of King Argistis I. 8th century B.C.

An ancient Armenian coin

A statue discovered in Artashat. 2nd century B.C.



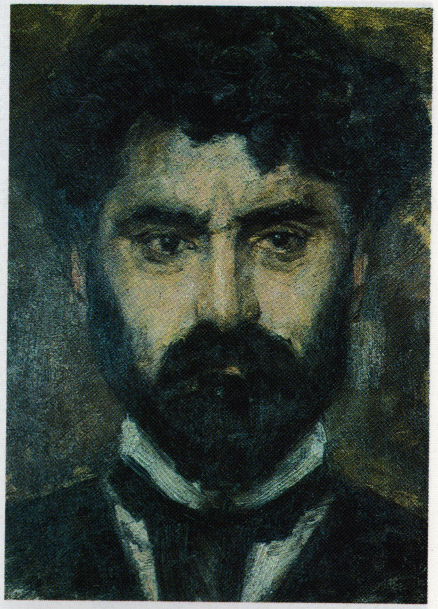
Yet Yerevan retained the features of a small town with narrow, crooked streets lined with low adobe houses. Attempts to put the town in shape led nowhere. A project to rebuild several of the city's central streets, drawn up in the 1850s, took years to negotiate the labyrinths of officialdom. When, finally, the project was endorsed, there were no funds available.

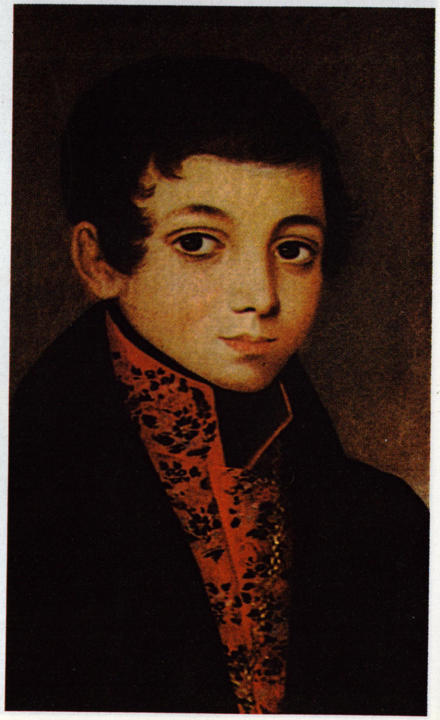
The city's insanitary state—filthy bazaars, refuse littered streets, etc.—were the reasons for frequent outbreaks of epidemics. It was not surprising, therefore, that average life expectancy in Yerevan was no higher than 40 years.

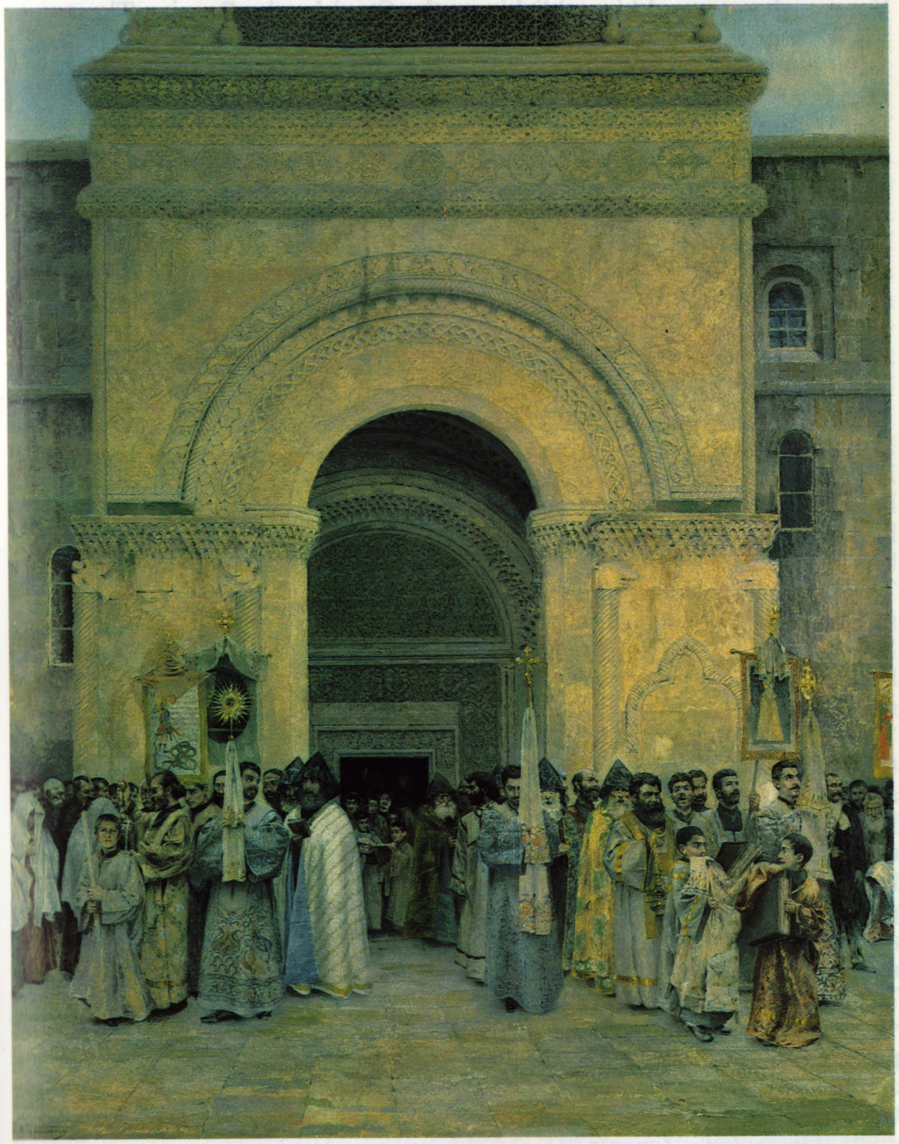
In the early 20th century, Yerevan became a major centre for the revolutionary movement in Transcaucasia, and social-democratic groups did a great deal to disseminate the Marxist ideas throughout the country.

During the first Russian Revolution of 1905-07, the Yerevan branch of the Caucasian Affiliation of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party sent a delegate to the Fourth Party Conference held in Stockholm in 1906. He was Stepan Shahumyan, one of the organizers of the revolutionary movement in Transcaucasia.

Once Soviet government was secure in Armenia, intense economic construction got under way in Yerevan, and, in 1936, the city was named the capital of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. It took a few decades to turn the city into a major industrial, scientific and cultural centre of Transcaucasia.







The Art Gallery of Armenia

Stepan Agadzhanyan. *A Self-Portrait*

Akop Ovnatanyan. *Portrait of the Young Akimyan*

Vardges Surenyants. *A Procession Leaving Echmiadzin Cathedral*

Yerevan has several big publishing houses which print more than 1,100 book titles (total edition of 11,000,000 copies) a year. Translations have enabled Armenians to study Marx, Engels, and Lenin and to enjoy Pushkin, Lermontov, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov and writers of all the constituent republics of the Soviet Union in their own language. Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Boccaccio, Byron, Goethe, Heine, Balzac, Hugo, Dickens, Sienkiewicz, London, Dreiser, Hemingway, Remarque, Hašek, Čapec, etc., have also been translated, and the heroes of many world famous books now speak Armenian.

There are more than 120 libraries in Yerevan. The biggest is the Myasnikyan State Library which has over 6,550,000 volumes in its repositories.

Yerevan's 25 newspapers have a total circulation of 1,309,000 copies a day. Besides Armenian and Russian, there are also newspapers in the Azerbaijanian and Kurdish languages. The city's 90 or so periodicals (including magazines and journals) have a circulation nearing 20,000,000 copies a year.

The theatrical fare of Yerevan is varied and interesting enough to please the most demanding connoisseur. The Spendiarov Opera House has a rich repertoire and often features foreign celebrities on guest tours. The Sundukyan Drama Theatre (founded in January 1922) always performs to a full house. Other drama theatres in Yerevan include the Yerevan Armenian Theatre, the Stanislavsky Russian Theatre, the Jabarly Azerbaijanian Theatre, a young spectator's theatre, an experimental young people's theatre, and a puppet theatre.

The Armenian film industry's official birthday is considered to be April 1923, and its first film *Soviet Armenia* was made in 1924. Since then, Armenian film-makers have produced a number of films which have received high awards at national and international film festivals. TV and radio broadcasts are in Armenian and Russian.

Monument to Stepan Shahumyan

The Eternal Flame to the revolutionaries who fell fighting for Soviet power in Armenia

The 20 museums of Yerevan house priceless collections on the history, art and the revolutionary past of the Armenian people.

Public health has made great strides in Soviet times. Such diseases as trachoma, malaria and diphtheria, which used to take a toll of thousands of lives, have been liquidated. At present there are 40 hospitals, 8,000 physicians and 14,000 other medical personnel in Yerevan, compared to 36 doctors in the city before the Revolution.

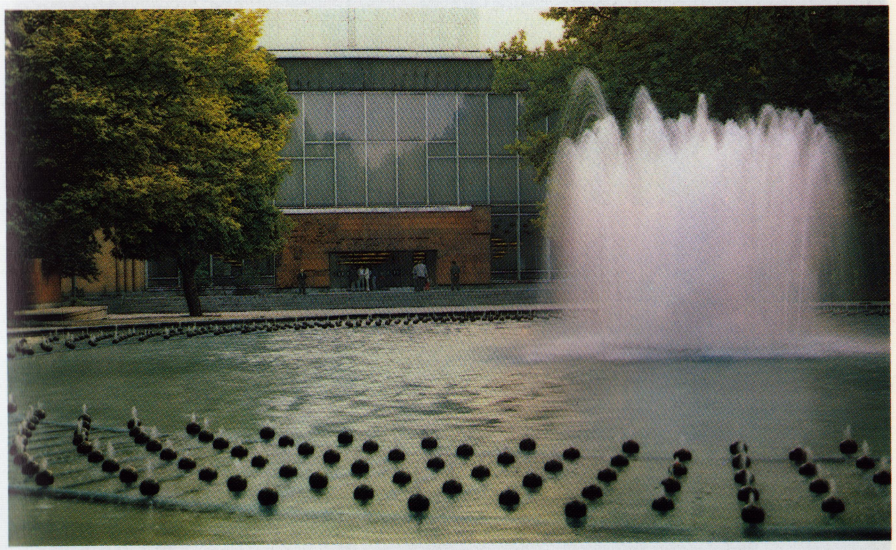
The city has more than 200 Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijanian schools. Tuition is free of charge as it is in schools all over the Soviet Union.

Almost 60,000 schoolchildren holiday at summer camps every year. For the under-sevens there are some 300 day care centres, attended by 55,000 children.

Compared to the 250,000 square metres of living space before the Revolution, Yerevan now possesses 14,000,000 square metres, and another million and more are commissioned every year. The city has new housing developments—Achapnyak, Nork, Ararat and the South-West, and the high-rise buildings on Yerevan's streets have given it a new skyline.

Yerevan is one of the most "sports-minded" cities of the Soviet Union. It has 5 stadiums, 16 swimming-pools, 12 soccer fields, about 300 volleyball, basketball and tennis courts, and more than 200,000 of its citizens train regularly. Many Armenian sportsmen are national, European and World title holders. Future champions are trained by experienced coaches at 38 children's sports schools.

And now we invite you to take a stroll through the centre of Yerevan, an excellent chance to see the sights of the city and to get to know its hospitable people better.



The Sundukyan Drama Theatre

The *Rossia* Cinema

Overleaf
A view of *Akhtanak* Bridge

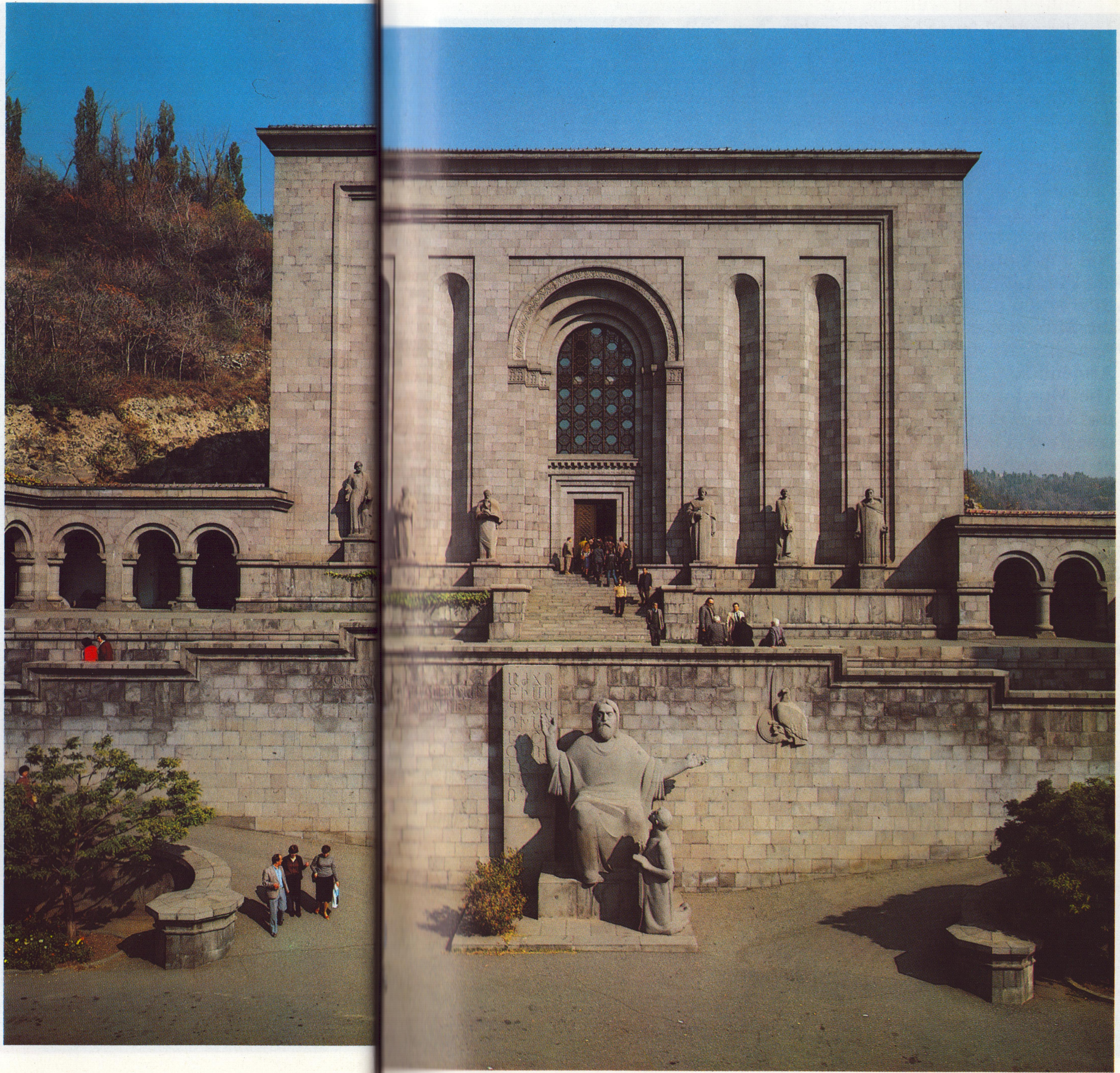
We suggest you begin your sightseeing tour from Ploshchad Lenina (**LENIN SQUARE**), compositionally the centre of the city and the hub of many of its major thoroughfares. Lenin Square is the scene of official ceremonies, parades and rallies, and attracts crowds of holiday-makers on red letter days. On the southern side of the square there is a **monument to Vladimir Lenin,** the work of the outstanding sculptor Sergei Merkurov. It was unveiled on November 29, 1940, Soviet Armenia's 20th anniversary. The pedestal of polished granite was designed by architects Natalia Paremuzova and Levon Vartanov.
The construction of Lenin Square began in 1926, and, though many architects were involved, Alexander Tamanyan (1878-1936) is by right, considered to be its chief architect. He drafted the first masterplan of Yerevan in 1924 which set aside a central place for the city's chief square.
The square is dominated by the **Government House,** the seat of the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR. This building was partly put up in 1929 and completed in 1941. It is an irregular pentagonal structure with one concave side, decorated with columns and arches. An elegant colonnade above the arches forms a gallery along the entire façade, which is divided into two by a high clock tower, flying the State Flag of the Armenian SSR—red with a blue lengthwise stripe.
On the western side of the square, across from the Government House, is the building of the **State**

Razdan Stadium

АЭРОФЛОТ

Committee for Agricultural and Related Industries. This was designed by Samvel Safaryan. A comparison of the two buildings reveals that, though they look alike, they are in fact quite different and, whereas the first is artistic in form, the second has an aura of elegant simplicity about it. The other buildings in Lenin Square are **the *Armenia* Hotel, the Trade Unions' building** and **the House of Communications** which includes the post office, the telegraph and international telephone offices.

You may have noticed the fine ornaments on the buildings in Lenin Square. Armenian artisans have made stone carving an art. This is only natural, because throughout their history, Armenians have had to deal with stone. Many of their sayings feature stones too: "A trimmed stone won't lie idle for long"; "A good stone is worth a lot even if it's muddy"; "It isn't every man you'll share a meal with, nor will any stone build you a house".



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Lenin Avenue

Matenadaran, the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts named after Mashtots

The **"singing" fountains** are another attraction of Lenin Square. They were invented by Abram Abramyan who combined music, water and colour. In the evenings townspeople and guests gather around the fountains to watch the fantastic play of the rainbow-coloured jets of water.

Opposite the fountains stands a building housing three major museums: the Museum of the Revolution of the Armenian SSR, the Museum of the History of Armenia and the Art Gallery of Armenia.

The **Museum of the Revolution of the Armenian SSR** is a major research and educational institution of the republic. The museum opened its doors in 1960 and recounts the historical path traversed by the people of Armenia under the leadership of the Communist Party. There are 40,000 documents, photographs and works of art in the museum's possession.

Quite a few of the exhibits describe the revolutionary activities of Vladimir Lenin and of his comrades: Isaac Lalayants, Bogdan Knunyants, Suren Spandaryan, Stepan Shahumyan, Kamo (Simon Ter-Petrosyan), Alexander Myasnikyan and many others.

The **Museum of the History of Armenia** was founded in 1921 and possesses 160,000 items. On display are unique articles relating to civilizations of the past. Visitors can see implements used in the Stone Age, items of bronze and iron, implements from the Urartu civilization, statuettes, pitchers,

Doors of the Matenadaran

The entrance to Matenadaran

coins, jewellery, and household utensils. All of them were discovered on the territory of Armenia. In the ethnic section of the museum, visitors will, no doubt, find the traditional dress, carpets, amulets and farming implements of great interest.

Also on display are documents testifying to long standing ties between Armenia and Russia, and about the incorporation of Eastern Armenia into Russia (1828).

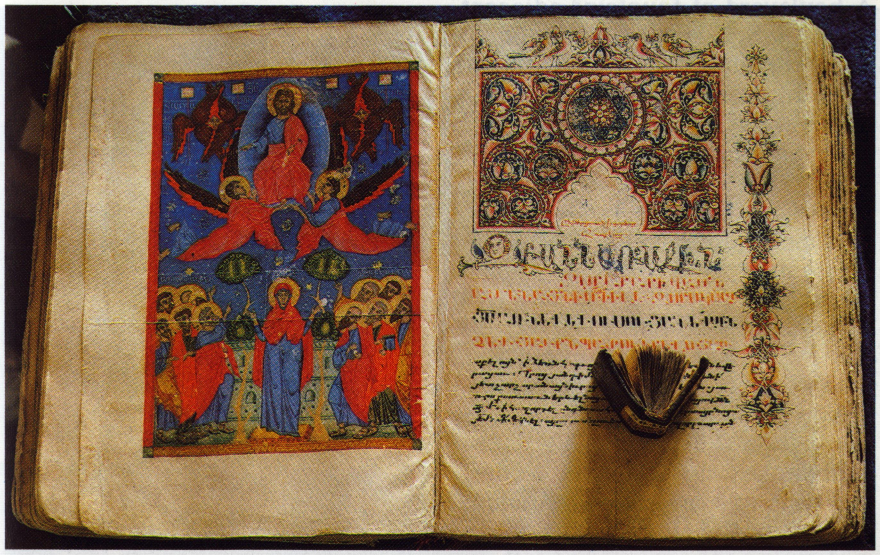
The Art Gallery of Armenia has a collection of over 16,000 paintings by Armenian, Russian, West European and Oriental artists. It is considered to be one of the best art galleries in the Soviet Union.

The section on Armenian art is the richest and covers a period from the 7th century to the present day. The oldest objects which have come down to us are frescoes from the churches in Arug and Lmba. The murals in the churches of Gregory the Illuminator in Ani, and of the Akhpat, Tatev and Akhtalin monasteries belong to a later date (10th-14th centuries). There is a representative collection of works of that wonderful Armenian marine painter Ivan Aivazovsky, as well as such masters as Gevork Bashindzhagyan, Vardges Surenyants, Yegishe Tatevosyan, Arutyun Shishmanyan, etc.

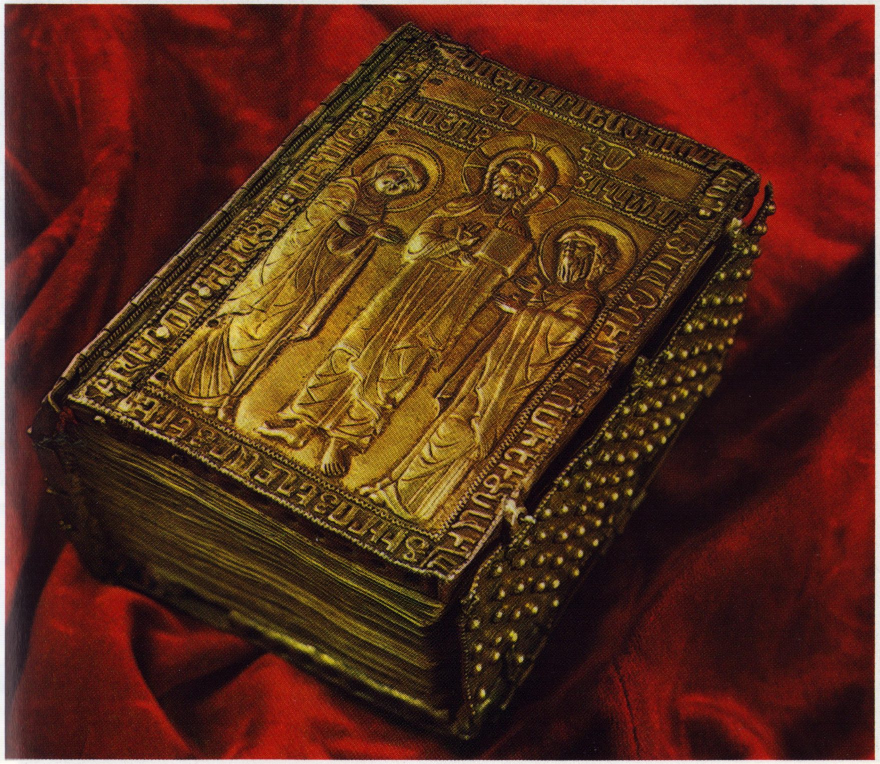
The section on Armenian art of the Soviet period features such eminent artists as Martiros Saryan, Stepan Agadzhanyan, Fanos Terlemezyan, Akop Kodzhoyan, Gabriel Gyurdzhan, Mariam Aslamazyan and Mger Abegyan.

The section on Russian art has a wonderful collection with works by virtually all the eminent Russian painters and sculptors. The 18th century is represented by Vladimir Borovikovsky, Alexei Venetsianov, Dmitry Levitsky, Ivan Argunov, and Vasily Tropinin. Of the brilliant painters of the 19th century, the Yerevan museum has works by Karl Bryullov, Vasily Vereshchagin, Nikolai Ghe, Isaak Levitan, Mikhail Vrubel, Orest Kiprensky, Konstantin Korovin, Arkhip Kuindzhi and Vasily Polenov.

The Russian Art Section in Soviet times is represented by the works of Pyotr Konchalovsky, Arkady Plastov, Ivan Shadr, Sergei Gerasimov, Sergei Konenkov and others.

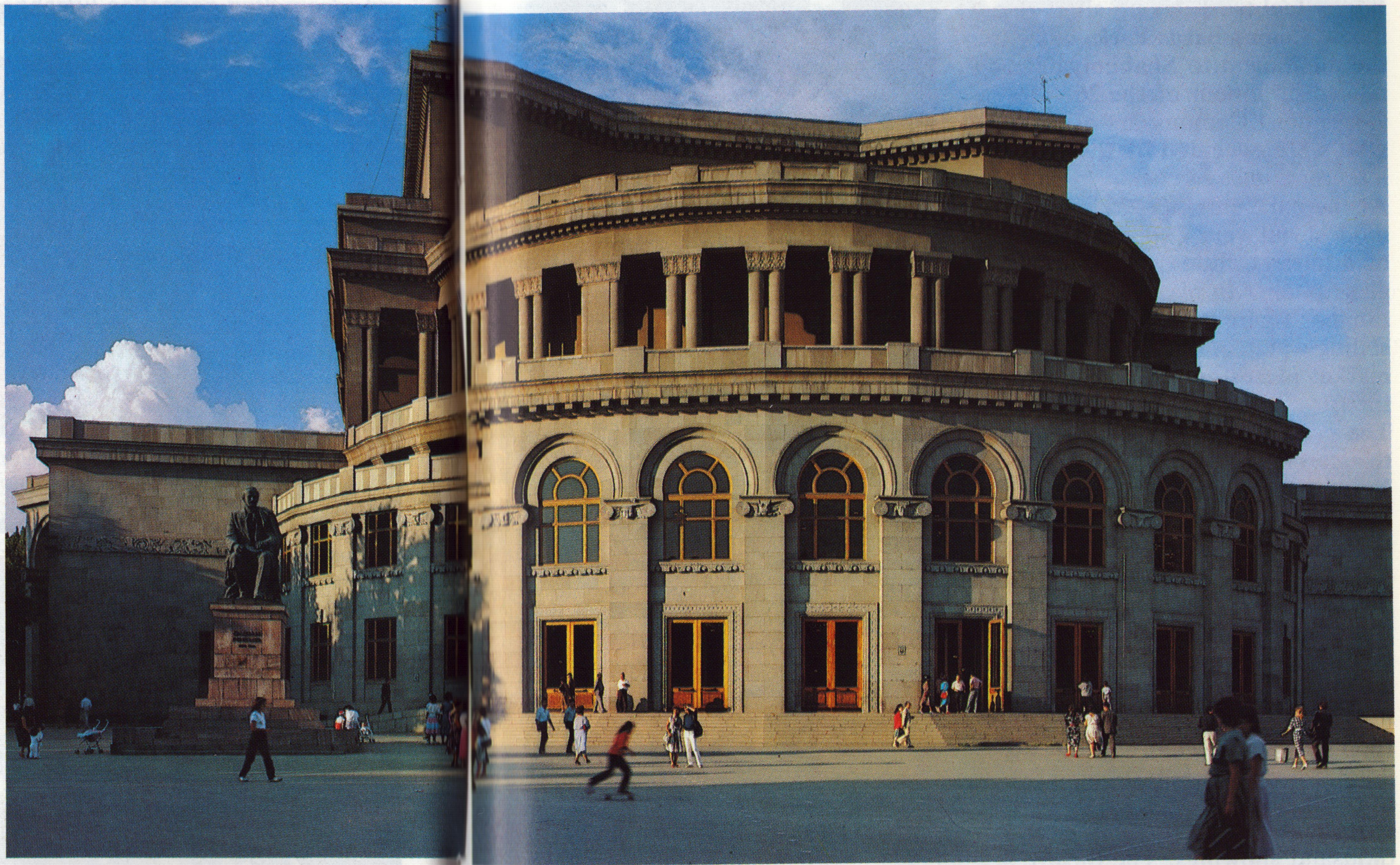


Books from the Matenadaran collection



Gospel cover. 1255

A boulevard of fountains adjacent to Lenin Square has a chain of pools running down the centre with 2,750 fountains splashing in them. These were put up to mark Yerevan's 2,750th anniversary in 1968.
Midway through the boulevard (220 metres long) is the **Eternal Flame** in memory of those who fell fighting for Soviet power in Armenia (the architect is Edvard Sarapyan). The boulevard opens onto a square with a **monument to Stepan Shahumyan,** a close associate of Lenin. Stepan Shahumyan was a talented leader, a tribune and revolutionary, and founder of the first Marxist group in Armenia. He was shot by the forces of intervention in 1918 with a group of commissars of the Baku Commune. The monument was sculpted by Sergei Merkurov.



The Spendiarov Opera House

"The Swan Lake" in front of the Opera House

A scene from the opera *Almast*

If you feel tired, take a short rest in the **Communards Park,** opposite the monument to Shahumyan and named in honour of the 26 Communist Commissars of Baku who were executed by the interventionist forces.

At the park entrance there is a modest but very expressive statue of a tattered little urchin with a glass pitcher in his hands, a familiar figure who could be seen selling water in the streets and market places of Yerevan in olden times.

The central lane of the park leads to one of the loveliest structures in Yerevan, the **Sundukyan Drama Theatre.** Although the Armenian theatre has a two-thousand-year-long history, a truly national theatre appeared only in Soviet times. On the theatre's opening night on January 25, 1922, the audience was treated to *Pepo*, an immensely popular comedy by the founder of the school of realistic drama in Armenia, Gabriel Sundukyan (1825-1912). The play enjoyed a very long run of over a thousand showings. The theatre's varied repertoire includes plays by Ostrovsky, Chekhov, Gorky, Shakespeare, Molière, Schiller and Ibsen.

The Sundukyan Theatre seats 1,140 people and was designed by Rafael Alaverdyan in 1966. Its spacious foyer with a mural by Martiros Saryan opens onto a winter garden with a pool.

A short walk from the theatre will bring you to the **monument to Alexander Myasnikyan** (1886-1925), an eminent politician and statesman and Lenin's associate.

Sayat-Nova Street

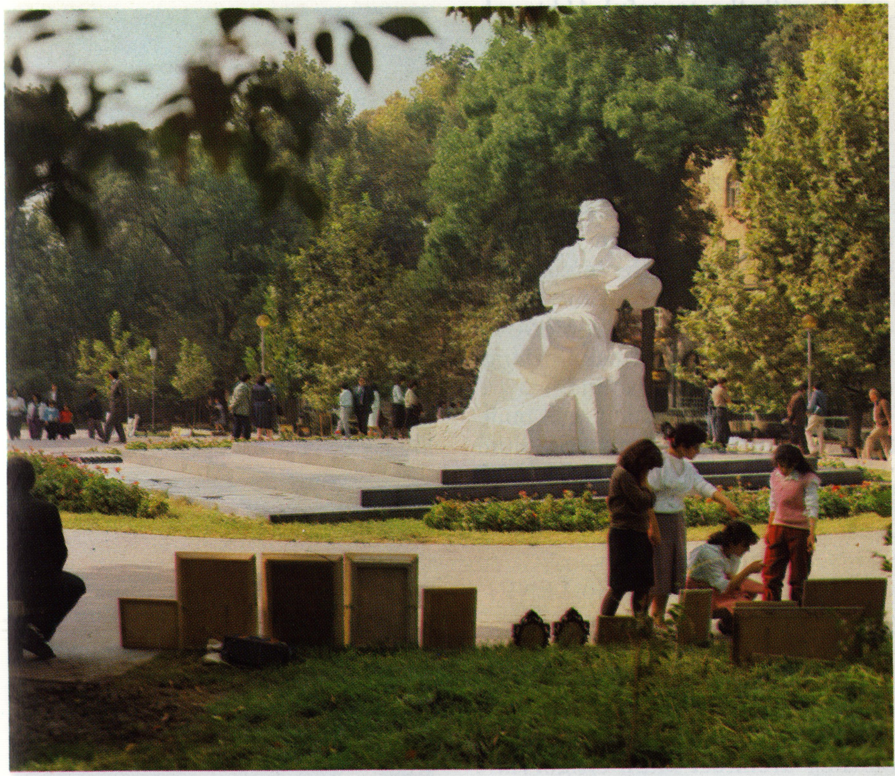
Monument to Sayat-Nova

He joined the revolutionary movement in 1904 and in 1919 he was elected Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Belorussia and in 1921, appointed Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Armenia. Alexander Myasnikyan died in an air-crash.

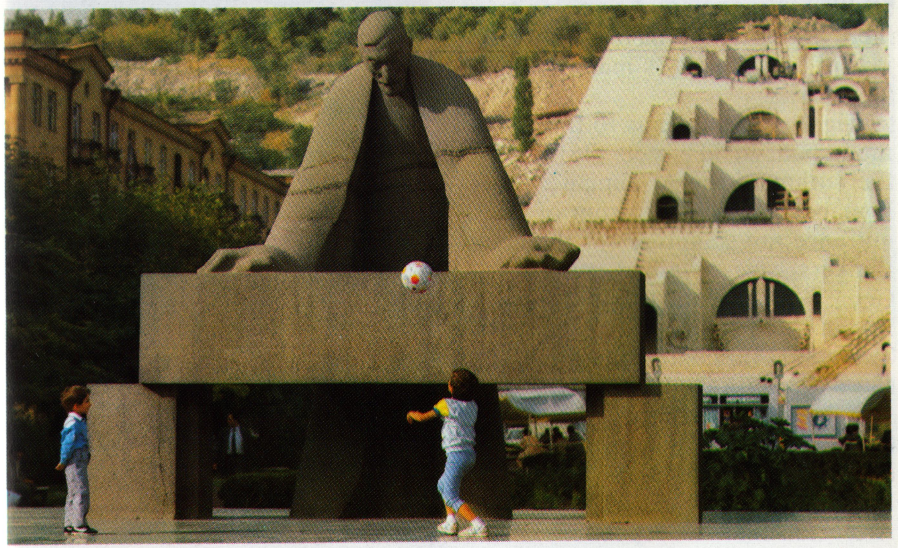
The opposite side of the park faces Karmir-Banaki Street, and just a little way off, parallel to the street, runs the turbulent river Razdan. It is spanned by the *Akhtanak* (Victory) Bridge built in 1945 and named in honour of the victory over Nazi Germany. The bridge is 200 metres long, 25 metres wide and 34 metres high (engineer Simon Ovnanyan, architects, Artashes Mamidzhanyan and Ashot Asatryan) and links the city with the Echmiadzin highway, the bus terminal and the airport.

On the left bank of the river, near the bridge, there is a huge basalt building which looks like a fortress or a castle. This building houses the winecellars of the ***Ararat* Trust,** and was built by the architect Rafael Israelyan on the spot where the palace of the sirdar used to stand. Alexander Griboyedov's immortal comedy *Woe from Wit* was first performed in the palace in the presence of the author, in 1827, and the actors were officers of the Imperial Russian Army.

The **cognac factory** is on the opposite, right, bank. Designed by architect Ovanes Markaryan, the building has nine elegant arches and a long stairway leading to the entrance. The two buildings form what seems to be an architectural



Monument to Martiros Saryan



Monument to Alexander Tamanyan

whole with the graceful *Akhtanak* Bridge.

Once across the bridge, the highway takes you along the tortuous banks of the Razdan River gorge. This is where Yerevan's citizens love to come to relax.

The Khachatur Abovyan Children's Park, on the left bank of the Razdan, is linked to the city's centre by a half-kilometre long tunnel. The park has thrilling luna-type amusements, and a children's railway which was built in 1938. The huge Razdan Stadium with a seating capacity of 75,000 is on the opposite bank.

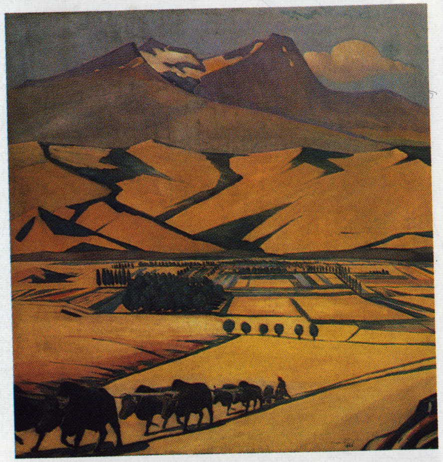
And, with that, we end our first sightseeing tour of Yerevan.

Our next walk takes us to **LENIN AVENUE** (Prospekt Lenina).

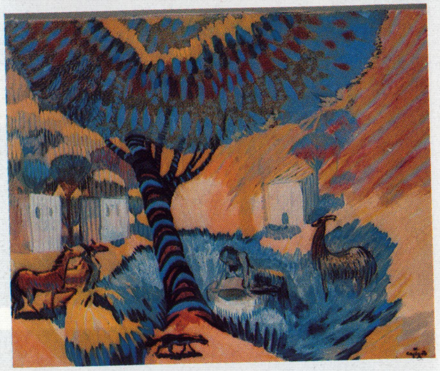
On Lenin Avenue one can find **Matenadaran,** named after Mesrop Mashtots. This is the famous Institute of Ancient Manuscripts built by architect Mark Grigoryan in 1957. Everyone who comes to Yerevan visits the institute because it is one of the city's major landmarks.

A flight of steps leads to the monument to Mashtots (361-440), the author of the Armenian alphabet. Standing in front of the entrance are sculptures of the great thinkers, scientists and cultural figures of ancient times—Toros Roslin (13th century), Grigor Tatevtsi (15th century), Anani Shirakatsi (7th century), Movses Khorenatsi (5th century), Mkhitar Gosh (12th century) and Frik (14th century).

Matenadaran, which in old Armenian means "depository of



Martiros Saryan. *Aragats*



Martiros Saryan. *By the Well on a Hot Day*

The painter's studio

Martiros Saryan's House Museum

manuscripts" and "library", is a large research centre for the study and safekeeping of manuscripts. People in ancient and medieval Armenia took great care of their manuscripts as they played an important role in the people's struggle against spiritual enslavement and assimilation. All the large monasteries and universities had special scriptoria where master calligraphers made copies of books by Armenian scholars and writers and the works of foreign authors were translated into Armenian.

Tens of thousands of Armenian manuscripts were destroyed in the countless wars and invasions that ravaged the country, and only 25,000 manuscript volumes have been preserved to our times. Of these there are more than 10,000 folios and also 2,500 fragments in Matenadaran. The rest are to be found in museums and libraries all over the world, mainly in Venice, Jerusalem, Vienna, Beirut, Paris and London.

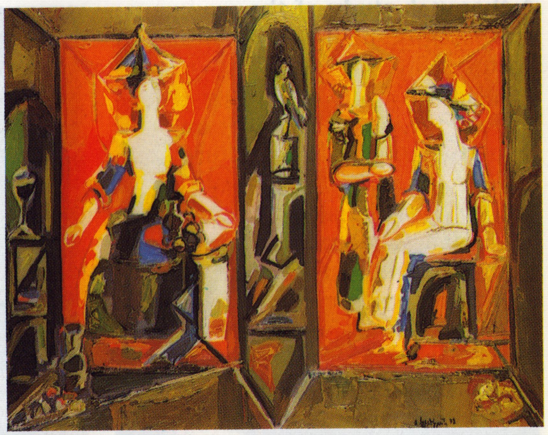
Special armoured basements where the manuscripts are protected from mould and fire, are the "holy of holies" of Matenadaran.

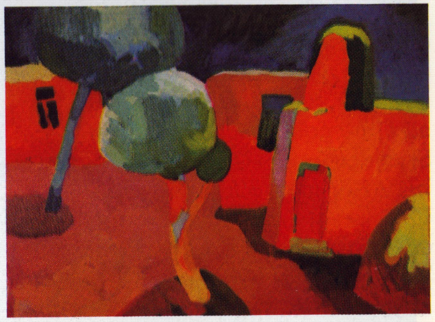
The oldest parchment book in the depository is the Gospel of St. Lazarus written in 887 A.D., although there are earlier specimens which are incomplete and dated from the 5th-8th centuries. The oldest manuscript on paper refers to 981 A.D.

Visitors, of whom there are more than 50,000 a year, can see the best specimens of beautifully illustrated hand-written books displayed in the exhibition hall on the second floor. These books contain works on history, philosophy, mathematics, medicine, astronomy and geography. The largest in the world (34 kilograms) Armenian manuscript is displayed on a separate stand. It took seven hundred calf skins to make it. Next to it is a tiny book measuring 3×4 centimetres and weighing a mere 12 grams. Some of the other curios are Gospels dated 1053, 1193 and 1411 with unfading virtuoso miniatures, translations from Aristotle, a unique ancient Assyrian manuscript and an ancient Indian manuscript on palm leaves in the shape of a fan.

The Matenadaran collection of manuscripts is of vital importance for historical and cultural research not only of Armenia but of the entire Transcaucasus, Asia Minor and many countries of the Middle East. Some of the works of the great thinkers of ancient times have been preserved only in Armenian translation. Among them we find the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea; *On Nature*, a treatise by the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno and a number of others, the originals of which have been irretrievably lost.

Matenadaran also has a fine archive department which has more than 100,000 documents belonging to the 14th-19th centuries. These include charters, diplomas, letters patent, edicts, treaties, and letters which contain a wealth of material on the history of the political and socio-economic life of Armenia and neighbouring countries.





Museum of Contemporary Art

Robert Elibekyan. *Theatre*

Minas Avetisyan. *Dzhadzhur*

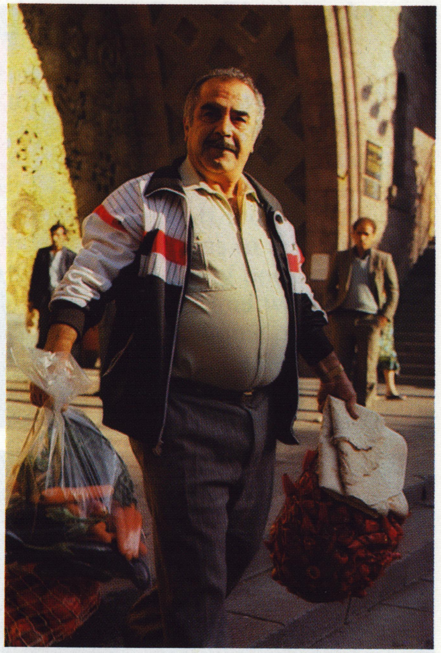
A thorough study of the manuscripts, many of which have been restored in special laboratories, help experts in various areas to shed light on many questions of the culture and history of the Caucasus and the Middle East, let alone Armenia. Armenian scholars and orientalists from all parts of the world come here to do research.

The **Opera House** named in honour of Alexander Spendiarov stands where Tumanyan Street crosses Lenin Avenue. It is one of the best architectural structures in the Armenian capital. Its architect, Alexander Tamanyan, found an original way of placing two halls in one building: an opera hall which seats 1,260, and a concert hall seating 1,400. Tamanyan was awarded the Gold Medal for his original blueprint of the building at the International Fair in Paris in 1937.

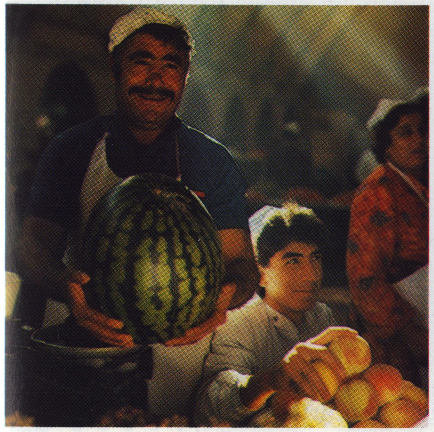
The theatre, which opened towards the end of 1932, stages classical Armenian, Russian and European operas, along with operas of modern Soviet and foreign composers.

Standing in the spacious square in front of the theatre are the **monuments to** two outstanding representatives of Armenian culture: the writer and public figure **Ovanes Tumanyan** (1869-1923), sculpted by Ara Sarkisyan, **and** the composer **Alexander Spendiarov** (1871-1928), designed by Ara Sarkisyan and Gukas Chubaryan. Spendiarov's grave is close by, in the shade of trees.

The **Aram Khachaturyan Concert Hall** and the **Komitas Conservatoire**



The Central Marketplace



are within a stone's throw of the Opera House.

The world of music and poetry is indivisible, and this was well illustrated in the works of Sayat-Nova, the great *ashug* (folk singer and story-teller) who lived in Tbilisi in the 18th century and wrote in three languages: Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijanian. Upon the decision of the World Peace Council **Sayat-Nova's** 250th Anniversary was celebrated in 1963, and a **monument** to him was erected in Yerevan. It was designed by sculptor Ara Arutyunyan and is an original structure of marble slabs crowned by a bust of Sayat-Nova, whose gaze is directed at the bas-reliefs of three women: an Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijanian.

The street that runs off Lenin Avenue, a little below the square, where the monument to Sayat-Nova stands, is named in his honour and the flowerbeds are planted with roses, his favourite flowers.

A statue of Martiros Saryan was erected in Lenin Avenue in 1986. Painters and art lovers gather at the monument on holidays and weekends, where paintings can be bought or portraits commissioned.

A walk along Saryan Street will take you to yet another Yerevan landmark, the house, now a **museum, of Martiros Saryan,** where a new structure for the exhibition of his pictures has been annexed to his small home and studio.

A **monument to** the architect **Alexander Tamanyan** by Artashes Ovsepyan stands where Lenin Avenue and Moskovyan Street intersect. The grateful residents of Yerevan have perpetuated the memory of this outstanding town-planner who has done so much for their city.

The **Modern Arts Museum** is situated on the corner of Lenin Avenue and Saryan Street. Its exhibition changes constantly and is supplemented with new works all the time. Frequent open-days, in which both well-known and budding artists participate, attract a large number of visitors.

The *Moskva* Cinema

The vaulted structure of the **Central Market** (architect Grigory Agababyan, engineer Amazasp Arakelyan) stands not far from the museum.

The central market is an original structure somewhat reminiscent of a giant gym. The trellised ferroconcrete constructions make the building (2,300 square metres) look light and airy.

The next route will take you along Abovyan Street and the districts in its vicinity.

ABOVYAN STREET starts from Lenin Square and you are bound to notice a building whose façade is plastered with playbills. This is the **Lesser Hall of the Philharmonic Society,** which often holds evenings of piano and violin music.

The one-storey and two-storey buildings with balconies at the beginning of the street give it a cosy, homely look. On one of the houses is a memorial plaque which says: *The great Russian writer, Maxim Gorky, was a guest in this house in 1928.* Today it houses the Geological Museum named in honour of Ovanes Karapetyan.

The Art Training Centre

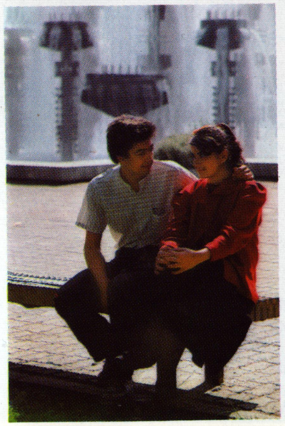
On the opposite side of the street there is a Baroque-style mansion with a façade of black stone, which houses the **Armenian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.** Ever since it was founded in 1948, the Society has been working to inform people abroad about the achievements of Soviet Armenia. It arranges exhibitions, tours for groups of actors and musicians, and holds Days of Literature and Art. At present the Society maintains contacts with 320 organizations—governmental, social, scientific and cultural—in more than 80 countries.

In the old section of the street there are some comparatively new buildings: ***Detsky Mir*** (Children's World) department store, the ***Yerevan* Hotel,** the **Artists' House of Armenia** which arranges the more important exhibitions of the works of painters, sculptors and graphic and poster artists, and the ***Moskva* Cinema** with two indoor and one outdoor halls.

Opposite the cinema is the **Russian Drama Theatre** named after Stanislavsky which has been staging works of Russian classical and modern drama ever since 1937. Plays by Armenian dramatists are staged in the theatre, too.

Next door to the theatre is the **Republic's Committee on Physical Culture and Sport.**

On many occasions Armenian athletes have become Olympic, World, European, and USSR champions. The sports world is familiar with the names of weight lifters Sergo Ambartsumyan and Yurik Vardanyan, the gymnasts



Fountains on the Koltsevoi Boulevard

The Molodyozhnaya Metro Station

Grant Shaginyan and Albert Azaryan, the pentathlon champion Igor Novikov and the boxer Vladimir Yengibaryan.

After its intersection with Tumanyan Street, Abovyan Street changes noticeably. The sidewalks grow wider and shadier, and are decorated with flowerbeds and shrubbery, awnings and miniature pools.

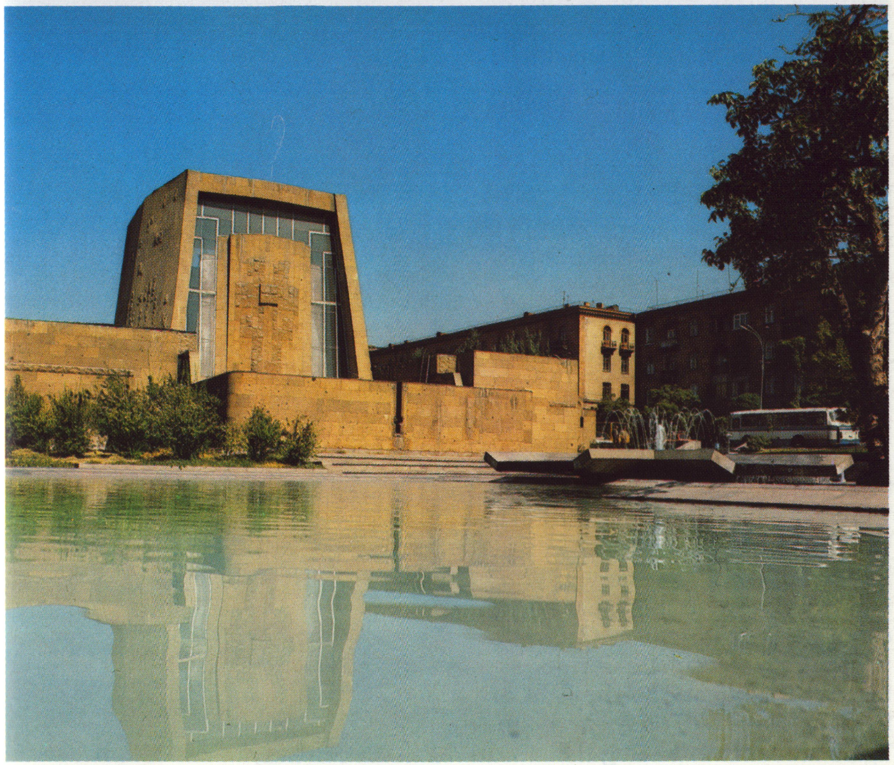
Armenia has always been known for its artists, sculptors and stone carvers. Love for art is cultivated from childhood in Armenian families. You will probably want to see the Republic's Centre for Aesthetic Education which boasts the first **Children's Picture Gallery** in the world (on the corner of Abovyan Street and Sayat-Nova Avenue). This large building has several exhibition halls, studios, a concert hall and a library. At different times the Gallery has arranged exhibitions of children's works from the Soviet republics, Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Britain, France, the USA, Canada, India and Japan. Every year it holds several "one-man" shows of works by artists between the ages of three to sixteen. In keeping with tradition all the pictures are kept by the Gallery which already has a collection of more than 100,000 pictures.

On the opposite corner of Abovyan Street there is a building that houses two research institutes, the **Institute of Economics** and the **Language Institute,** and in the yard behind stands the 13th-century chapel which belonged to the Katogike Church. To the right, towers the 16-storey building of the **Hotel *Ani*.**

Further on, Abovyan Street crosses the Ring (Koltsevoi) Boulevard where, in a large square to the left, stands the **monument to** the classic of Armenian poetry **Avetik Isaakyan** (1875-1957), which was sculpted by Sergei Bagdasaryan and unveiled in 1965. His works, permeated with profound humanism and a respect for human dignity, are closely linked with the history and culture of the Armenian people and the best traditions of Russian and world literature.

High-relief portrait of Komitas in the Chamber Music House

The concert hall



The Chamber Music House

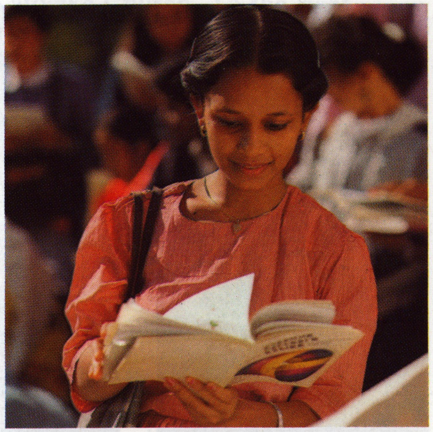
Many people in Yerevan still remember the poet who used to walk leisurely along the streets of the city with a walking-stick in his hand. He would bend his head slightly in gentle acknowledgement of the respectful greetings of passers-by. This is how he has been portrayed: stopping for a second to think before he continued on his way.

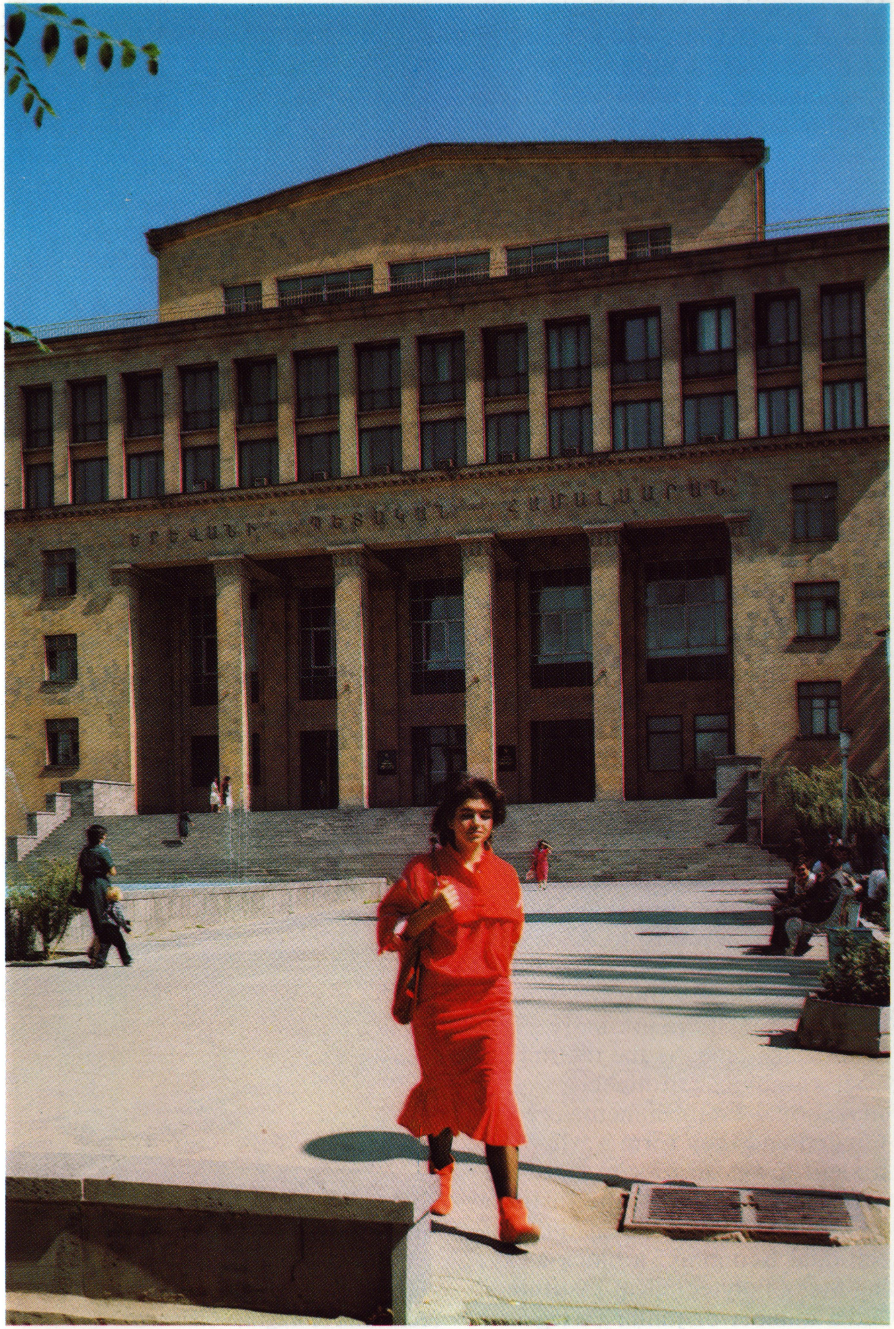
Further on in the square you will come across an original sculpture of white marble, ***Hands,*** sent to Yerevan by the Italian town of Carrara to symbolize the friendship between the twinned cities. Yerevan returned the compliment by presenting Carrara with a tuff stele—a spring decorated with a national ornament. A replica of the stele with the spring also stands in the square.

No less interesting and beautiful is the second part of the Ring Boulevard to the right from Abovyan Street.

The dominant landmark here is the **Chamber Music House** (architect Stepan Kyurkchyan) where concerts of organ music and recitals are held. It stands out among the other buildings in the city for its original combination of ancient outline and modern architectural form.

The buildings of **Yerevan University** face the boulevard. The University was founded on December 17, 1920, the very month that Soviet power was established in Armenia. Classes were conducted in the former teachers' seminary by the light of kerosene lamps. Today there are 7,500 students attending the





Yerevan University

University's fourteen departments. The new building was designed by architect Edmon Tigranyan.

A **monument to Mikael Nalbandyan** (1829-66), Armenian writer, philosopher and revolutionary democrat, stands in a corner of the boulevard. This monument is, probably, the only one in Yerevan that does not have the traditional pedestal. Tall, lean and erect, with head thrown proudly back, Nalbandyan's statue virtually stands on the ground. Its sculptor Nikogaios Nikogosyan gave a very faithful image of this noble champion, a representative of progressive-minded Armenian intellectuals, for whom the interests of the nation were inseparably linked with internationalism.

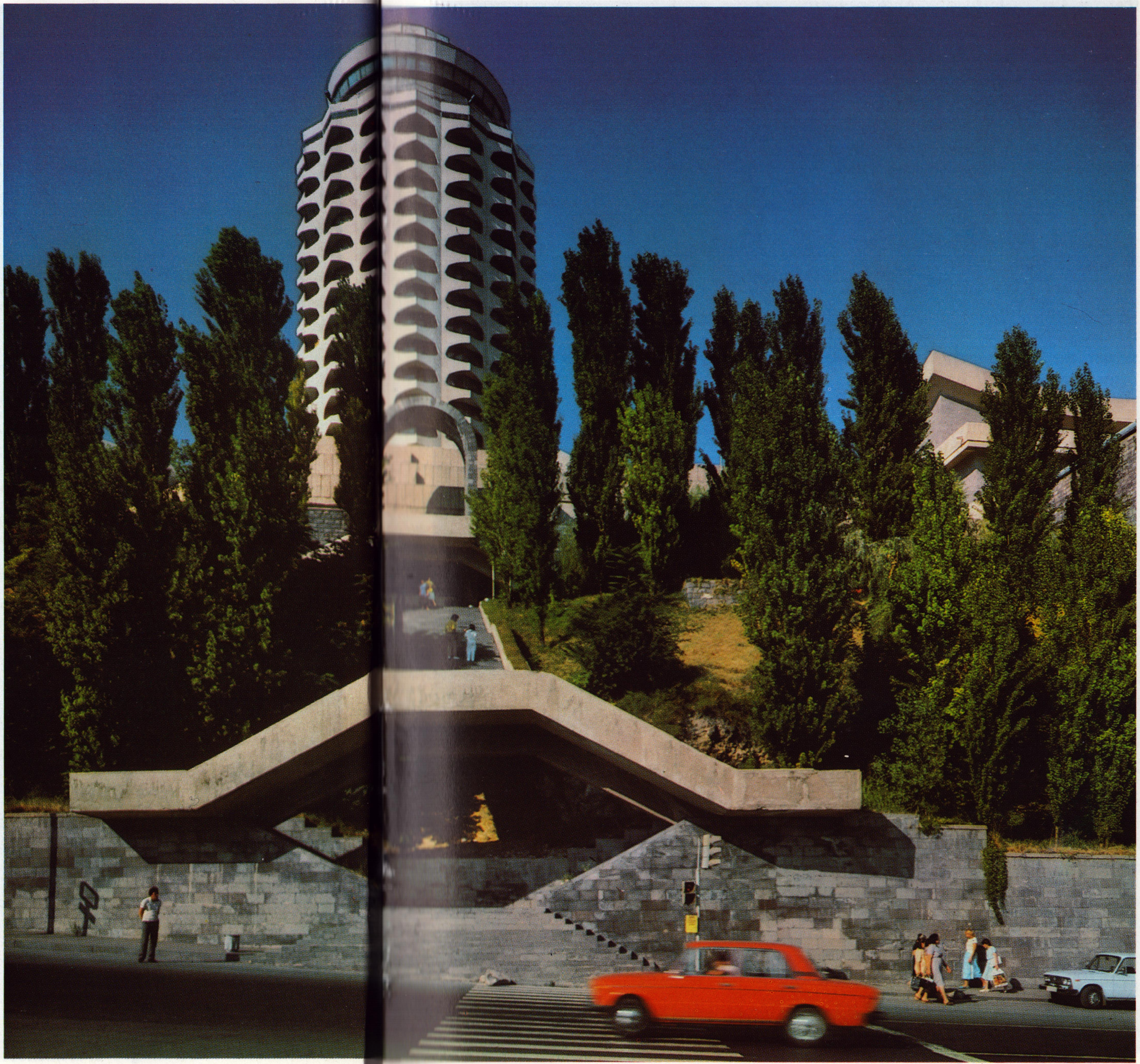
Where Knunyants Street crosses the boulevard, there stands the **statue of** an army leader **Vardan Mamikonyan,** the legendary national hero who led the Armenians against the Persian invaders in the middle of the 4th century. The statue was designed by Ervand Kochar in 1975.

After taking the right side of the boulevard you return to Abovyan Street. Higher up the boulevard, especially where it intersects with Kirov Street, there are more pedestrians. This is the district where a number of higher educational establishments are situated and they form a whole student town, so to say. Here are the Medical Institute, the Institute of Agriculture and the Institute of National Economy, a block away, the Marx Polytechnical Institute and a number of junior colleges.

Monument to Vardan Mamikonyan

Monument to Yegishe Charents

Before the revolution, Armenia did not have a single higher educational establishment, and to get an education, young Armenians had to go to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Paris or Geneva. Today, there are young men and women from the USA, the FRG, England, Sweden, France, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Afghanistan and Vietnam studying in Yerevan.



The Youth Palace

The street ends in a round open area on which a **monument to Khachatur Abovyan** (1805-48), enlightener and pedagogue, and founder of the new Armenian literature and literary language, stands. It was sculpted by Suren Stepanyan and unveiled in 1950.

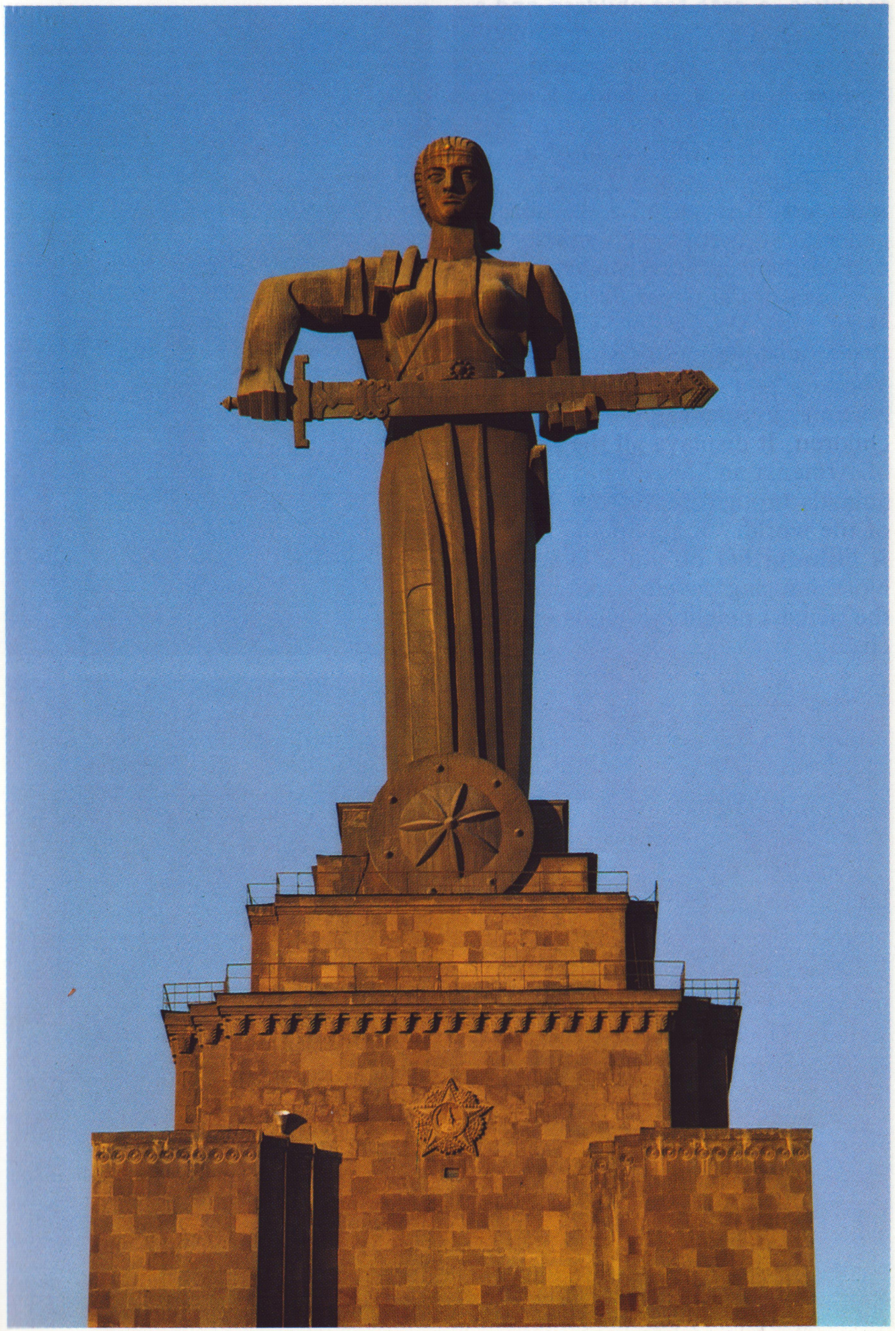
If you are not too tired and have the time, we recommend visiting ***Akhtanak*** (Victory) **Park** on Kanaker Plateau. It is only one stop from Abovyan Square on buses 2, 4, 14 or 24. On the route to the park, you will see one more structure which is bound to attract your attention. It is the **Youth Palace**—a huge edifice of original design which seems to "crown" Abovyan Street. This is where young couples get married. Besides facilities for wedding ceremonies the complex has a movie and concert hall which can seat 1,200, a hotel with accommodation for 500 guests, exhibition halls and gyms. The top storey has a revolving restaurant which enables you to admire the panorama of Yerevan. The latest developments in town planning enabled architects Saribek Khachikyan, Artur Tarkhanyan, Rachiya Pogosyan, Martin Zakharyan, and the engineers Gerasim Gevorkyan, Igor Tsaturyan and Sergei Bagdasaryan to erect this fine multi-functional building.

It will take only a few minutes to get to *Akhtanak* Park. There was a time when clouds of dust descended on the city from this area; now a dense strip of woodland shields Yerevan from the northern winds.

The park has many amusement

The *Akhtanak* Park

Mother Armenia monument



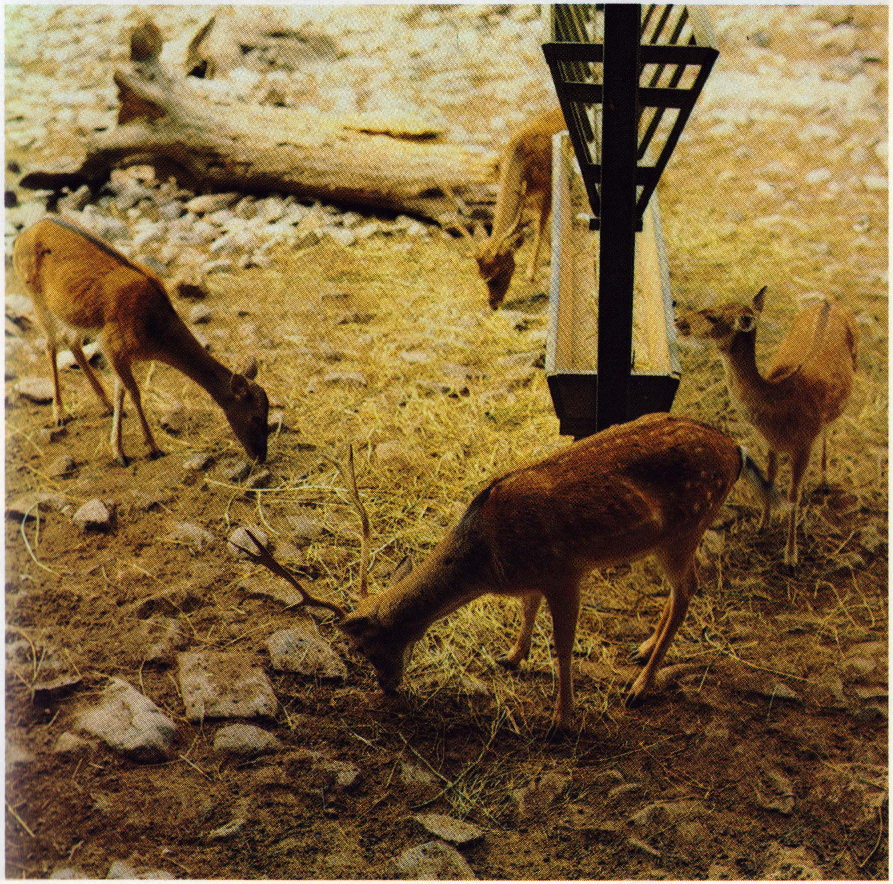
facilities, a café for children and a pond occupying an area of 12,000 square metres. **The monument *Mother Armenia*** (architect Rafael Israelyan, sculptor Ara Arutyunyan) is the statue of a woman placing a sword in its scabbard. It is set on a six-storey pedestal 36 metres high which houses the **exhibition *Soviet Armenia in the Great Patriotic War.***

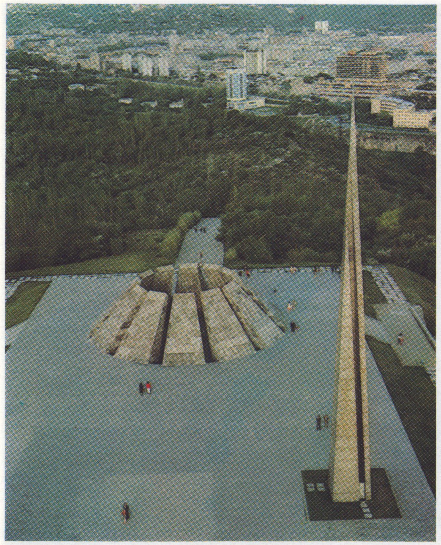
If you wish you can visit the Yerevan Zoo in Myasnikyan Avenue, a favourite place with children. It displays all the fauna of Armenia and also some exotic animals brought here from all parts of the world.

A little further on you will see the Nork housing development, one of the newest neighbourhoods of the city.

The Zoo

ЗООЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ
ПАРК





Memorial to the Victims of the Genocide of 1915

Pages 88-9

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia

Let us start our next tour of the city with **MARSHAL BAGRAMYAN AVENUE,** which is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Yerevan. Two- and three-storey mansions nestling among the thick foliage give the avenue its special charm. Even the air here is filled with the fragrance of flowers. This is probably the reason why writers, architects and scientists have chosen it as their place of residence. It is here that the Writers' and Architects' unions are situated, also the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR and the Republic's House of Technology.

A few minutes' walk from the beginning of Marshal Bagramyan Avenue will take you to Plekhanov Street to the **house** (now a museum) **of Aram Khachaturyan,** an outstanding composer of modern times. The composer's style was grounded in the Russian musical tradition and deeply rooted in Armenian national culture. He made wide use of folk intonations and rhythms and breathed new life into them by enriching them with new expressive devices.

Khachaturyan composed the first Armenian symphonies and ballets *Happiness* (1939) and *Gayane* (1942), and also the Armenian national anthem (1944). He was awarded the State Prize of the USSR five times, and received the Lenin Prize for the music to the ballet *Spartacus* in 1959.

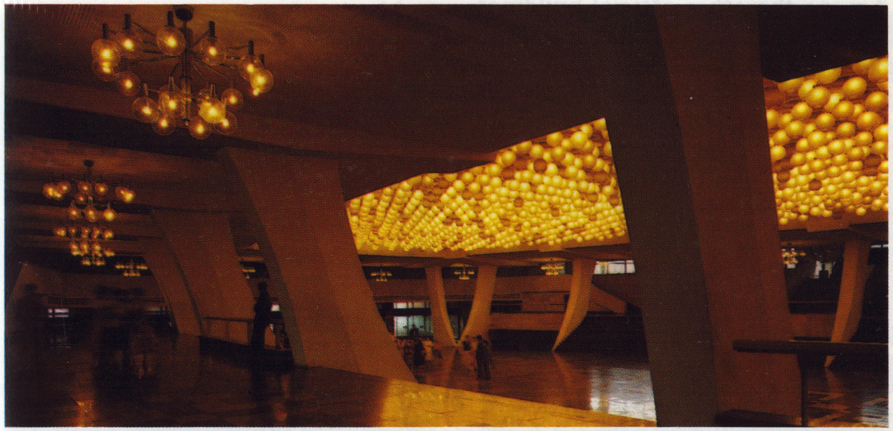
Khachaturyan was elected honorary member of *Saint Cecilia,* the Italian Academy of Music, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR and honorary professor of the Mexico Conservatoire.

The Yerevan City Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia and the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Armenia are also situated in Marshal Bagramyan Avenue. A little further on, a two-storey building houses the branch of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the Institute of the History of the Communist Party of Armenia.

Pages 92-3
Sports and Concert Complex

Interior of the complex

Fountains in front of the building

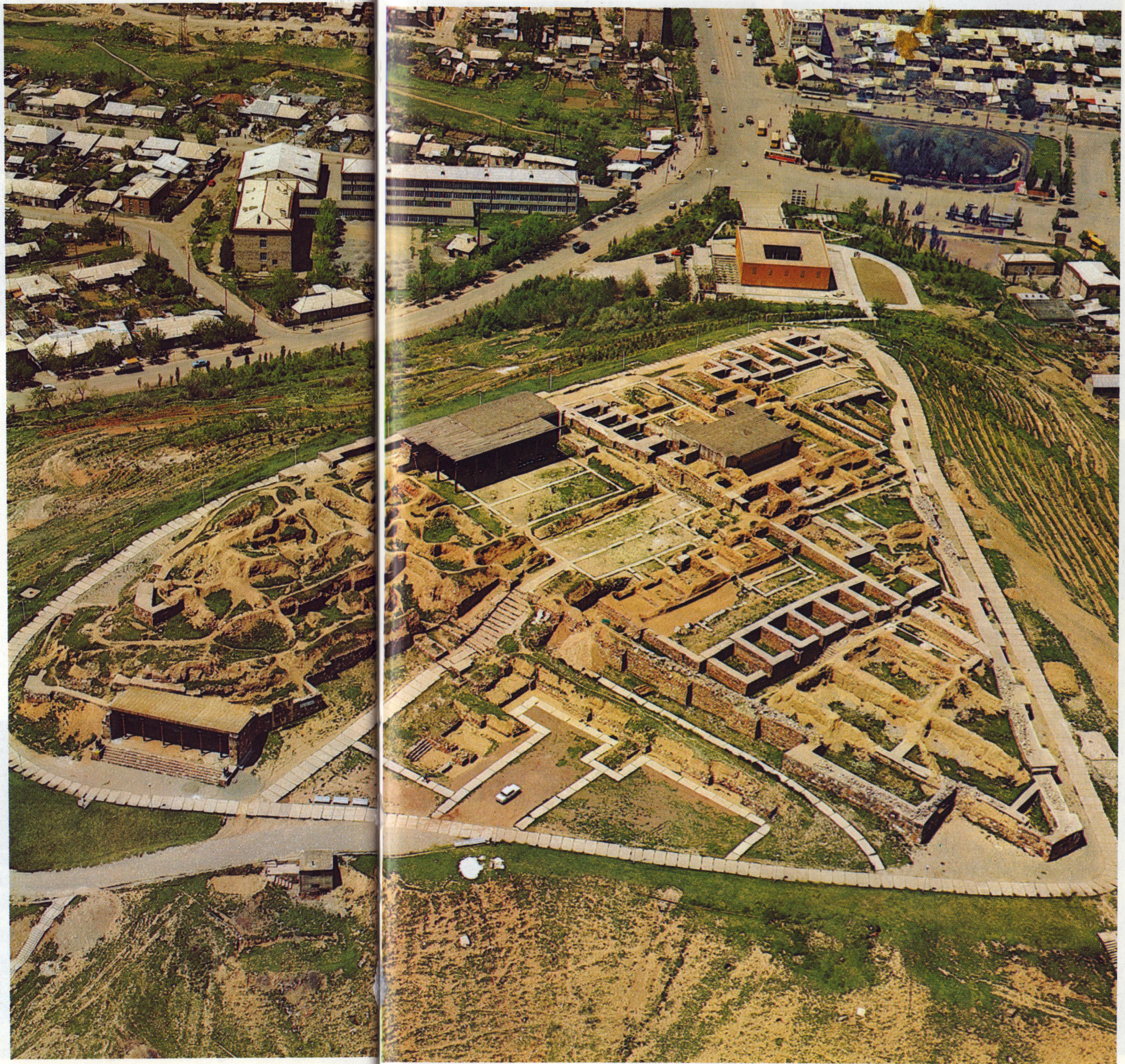


Among the other official buildings in the avenue, the most prominent is the building of the **Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia** designed by the architect Mark Grigoryan in 1949. It is faced with an unusual light-orange-coloured stone. The building of the **Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR** stands on the opposite side of the avenue.

Marshal Bagramyan Avenue ends at its intersection with Kievyan Street which descends sharply to the Razdan and terminates in a one-span bridge across the river gorge. The distance between the bases of the arches is 110 metres. Its total length is 364 metres, its width—26 metres and height—58 metres. The bridge was designed by engineers Varos Pinadzhyan, Nikolai Slavinsky and architect Grigory Agababyan.

A large housing area sprawls on the right bank of the Razdan. It is called Achapnyak (which means "right bank" in Armenian). It is a town within a town with its own schools, cinemas, shops and hospitals.

Immediately beyond the bridge there is the ***Tsitsernakaberd*** (Swallows' Fortress) **Park** on a high hill. The saplings which were planted there in the early-1950s have now grown into a forest.



Erebuni Fortress. 782 B.C.

On the hillside you can see the most original structures in Yerevan, the **Sports and Concert Complex** which was commissioned in 1984. Its two halls, seating 5,000 and 1,500, are joined by a revolving platform which enables big sports competitions, stage shows, gala meetings and the like to be held. Take a good look, when approaching the complex, at the flights of steps, the fountains and pools that blend so well with the landscape. The building was designed by a group of architects under the guidance of People's Architect of the USSR Koryun Akopyan.

On top of the hill stands the **memorial to the Victims of the 1915 Genocide** (architects Artur Tarkhanyan, Sashur Kalashyan, and sculptor Ovanes Khachatryan). Every year, on April 24, the day that the massacre started, hundreds of thousands of people gather at the memorial in sorrowful silence.

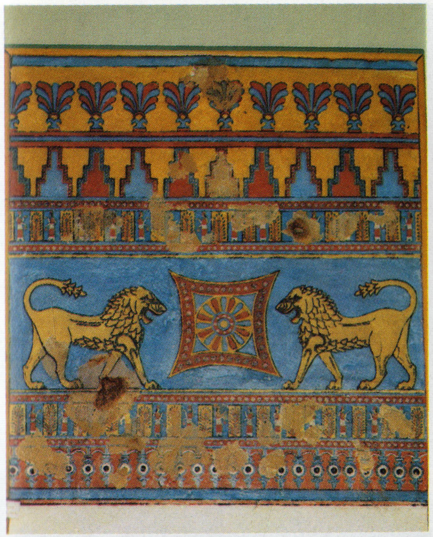
The monument consists of two parts—massive basalt steles leaning silently over the Eternal Flame, and a pointed mast thrust sharply upward, symbolizing the revival of the Armenian people.

STATION (Vokzalnaya) **SQUARE** is another interesting place to see. In the middle of the square, framed by the Railway Workers House of Culture, a hotel, and some apartment houses, stands the **monument to David of Sasun** (Sasunsky), the hero of the Armenian epos (sculptor Ervand Kochar, 1959).

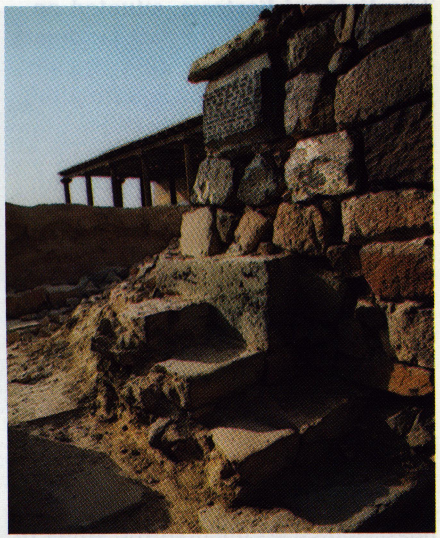
David, the hero of folk legends, the fearless champion of the Armenian people in the struggle against the invaders, is akin to the valiant warriors. The millennium of the legends about David of Sasun was widely celebrated in the Soviet Union in 1938.

From century to century, from generation to generation, people handed down legends about the feats of David and his great physical strength. Especially dramatic is the decisive battle, when David, who was loath to shed the blood of enemy warriors, challenges their commander, the ruler of an Arab caliphate, to a duel and kills him.

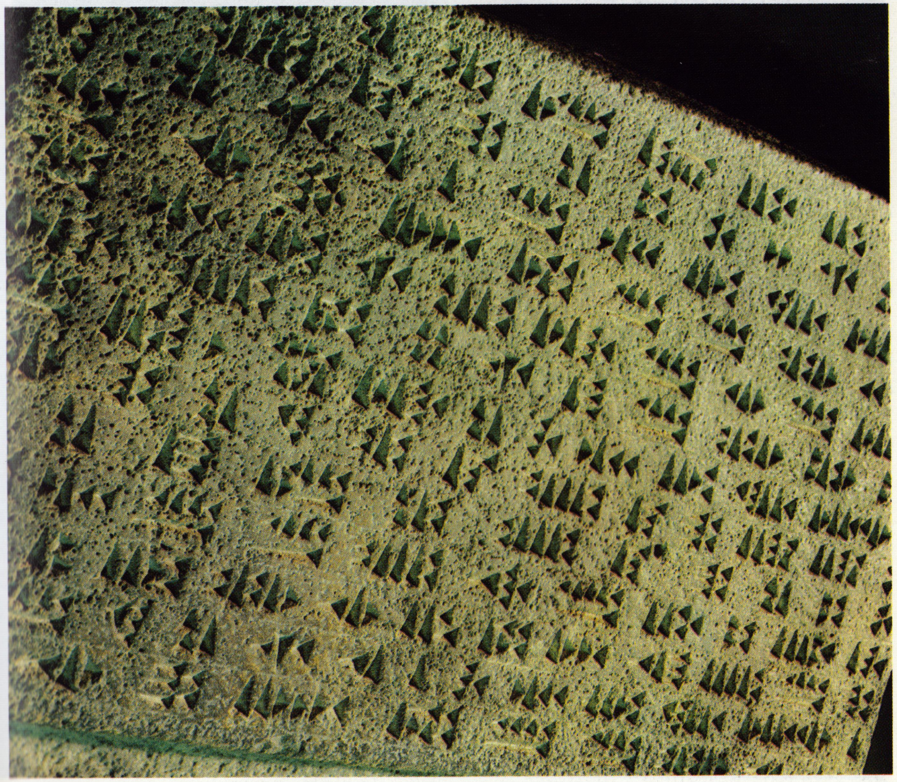
The sculptor Ervand Kochar portrayed David of Sasun on his faithful steed Dzhalali. In David's hands he put a sword held ready to fall on the heads of all invaders. Water flows from a bowl over the pedestal, which means that when the patience of the people is at an end, there will be no mercy for the oppressors.



Erebuni Fortress. Murals in the Small Hall of the palace



Erebuni. The excavation site



The stone slab with the cuneiform inscription giving the date of the founding of Erebuni in 782 B.C.

The **Erebuni Fortress,** situated on Arin-Berd Hill, is the last landmark on our tour of Yerevan. You can get to it from Station Square along Bakvi and Erebuni streets.

The fortress was built by Argistis I, the king of Urartu, in 782 B.C.

Excavations of Erebuni were begun in the 19th century, but were most intensive in the 1950s. It was then that archaeologists dug up a stone slab with a cuneiform inscription giving the date of the birth of the fortress and the town of Yerevan along with it.

The excavations, which have been going on for two centuries now, have helped to unearth the walls of a powerful citadel, the ruins of a palace with a hall that has an area of 440 square metres, living quarters, a granary, and some giant pitchers for wine and oil. The walls of the palace were decorated with frescoes and paintings depicting animals and plants, scenes of religious worship and hunting.

There is a museum at the foot of Arin-Berd which regularly receives new artifacts found by archaeologists in the Erebuni Fortress.

Zwartnots Airport

THE HISTORICAL LANDMARKS OF THE ARARAT VALLEY

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

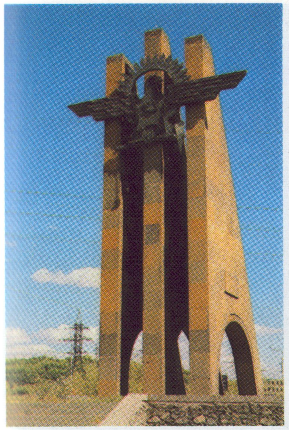
This excursion takes you to one of the oldest cities on the territory of the Soviet Union — Echmiadzin, the former capital of the Kingdom of Armenia (in the 2nd-4th centuries). In ancient times Echmiadzin was known as Vagarshapat.

Echmiadzin is a mere 20 kilometres from Yerevan. To the left the snowy peak of Mt. Ararat crowns a chain of mountains with lush vineyards in their foothills. We are in the Ararat Valley — the granary of Armenia, an arid plain made fertile by a dense network of irrigation canals.

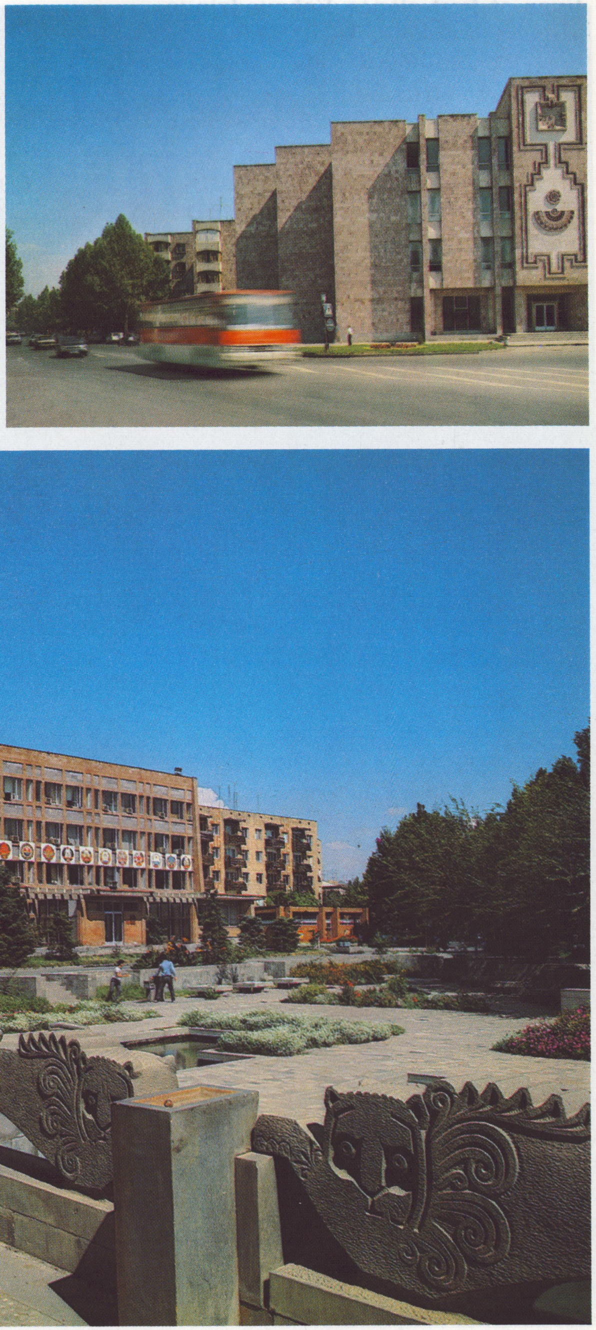
The principal occupation in these parts is viticulture, the oldest industry in Armenia. You may have noticed that bunches of grapes and their leaves are an element of national ornament.

The Ararat Valley may also be described as the biggest orchard of Armenia, and most of the orchards grow apricots. Incidentally, Armenia is the birthplace of the apricot. It was taken to Greece by Alexander the Great and then the Romans spread it throughout southern Europe. The peach is another native of Armenia, grown, for the most part, in the Ararat Valley. Anything and everything seems to grow on this wonderful soil: apples, pears, cherries, mazzards, plums, all kinds of vegetables, melons and watermelons. The Ararat Valley produces one-third of the geraniums grown in the Soviet Union from which an expensive oil is produced for the cosmetics industry.

Echmiadzin. Monument to Komitas

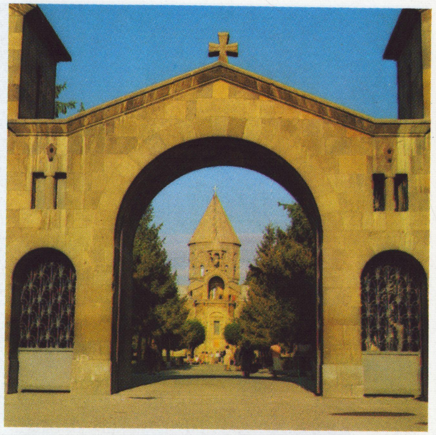


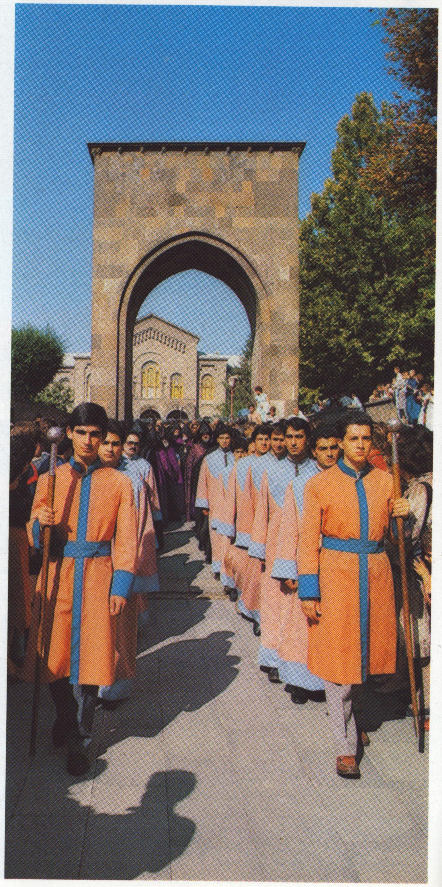
Monument on Echmiadzin Highway

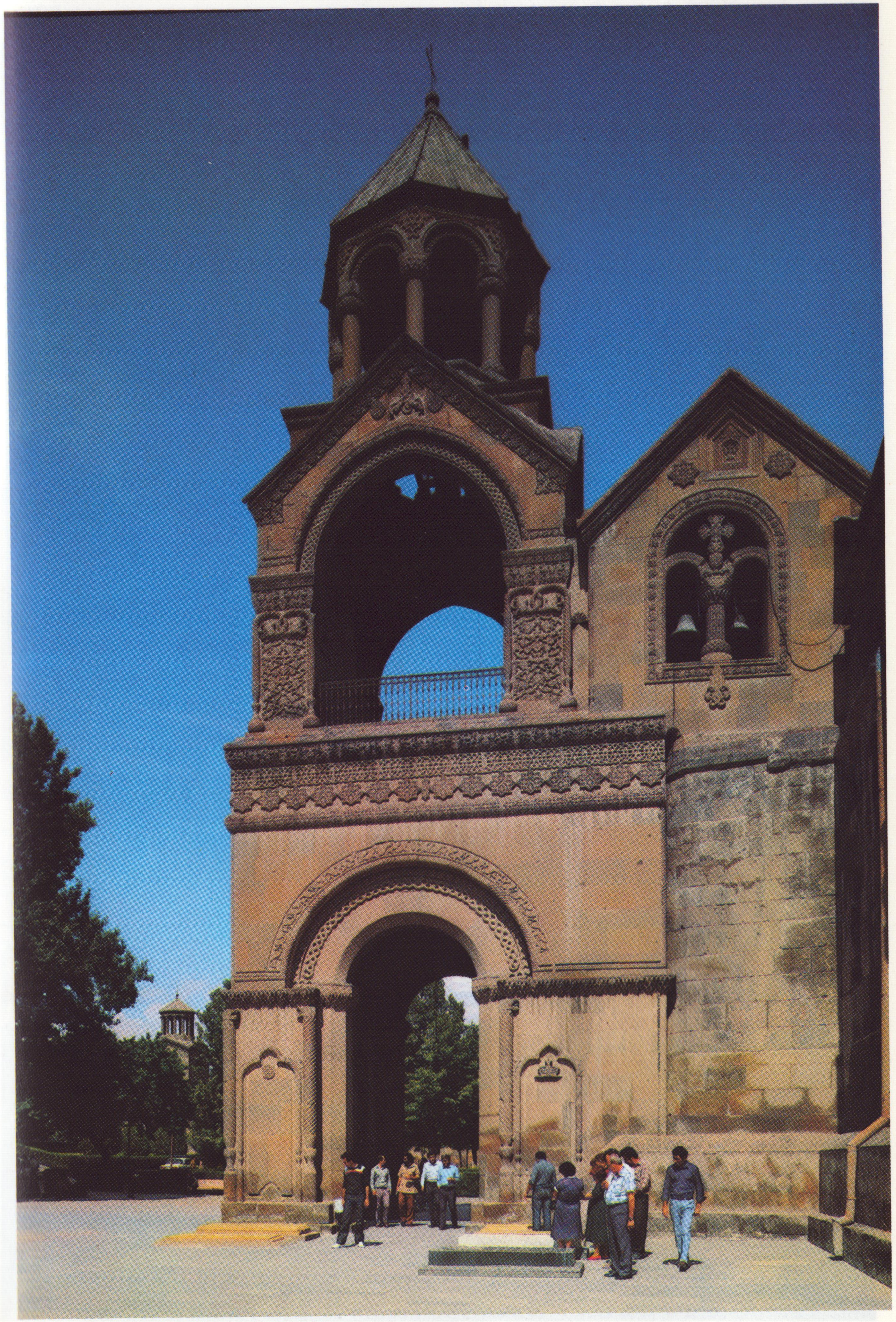


Views of the city

Even at first glance Echmiadzin is a pretty and cozy town, with homes made of tuff. The cathedral is its main attraction.
Legend has it that it was here that Jesus Christ descended from heaven to show where he wanted a church built. It was subsequently named Echmiadzin, which means *The Coming of the Only Begotten.*
The **Echmiadzin Cathedral** was the first Christian church on the territory of the Soviet Union.







Echmiadzin. A view of the cathedral. 4th-19th centuries

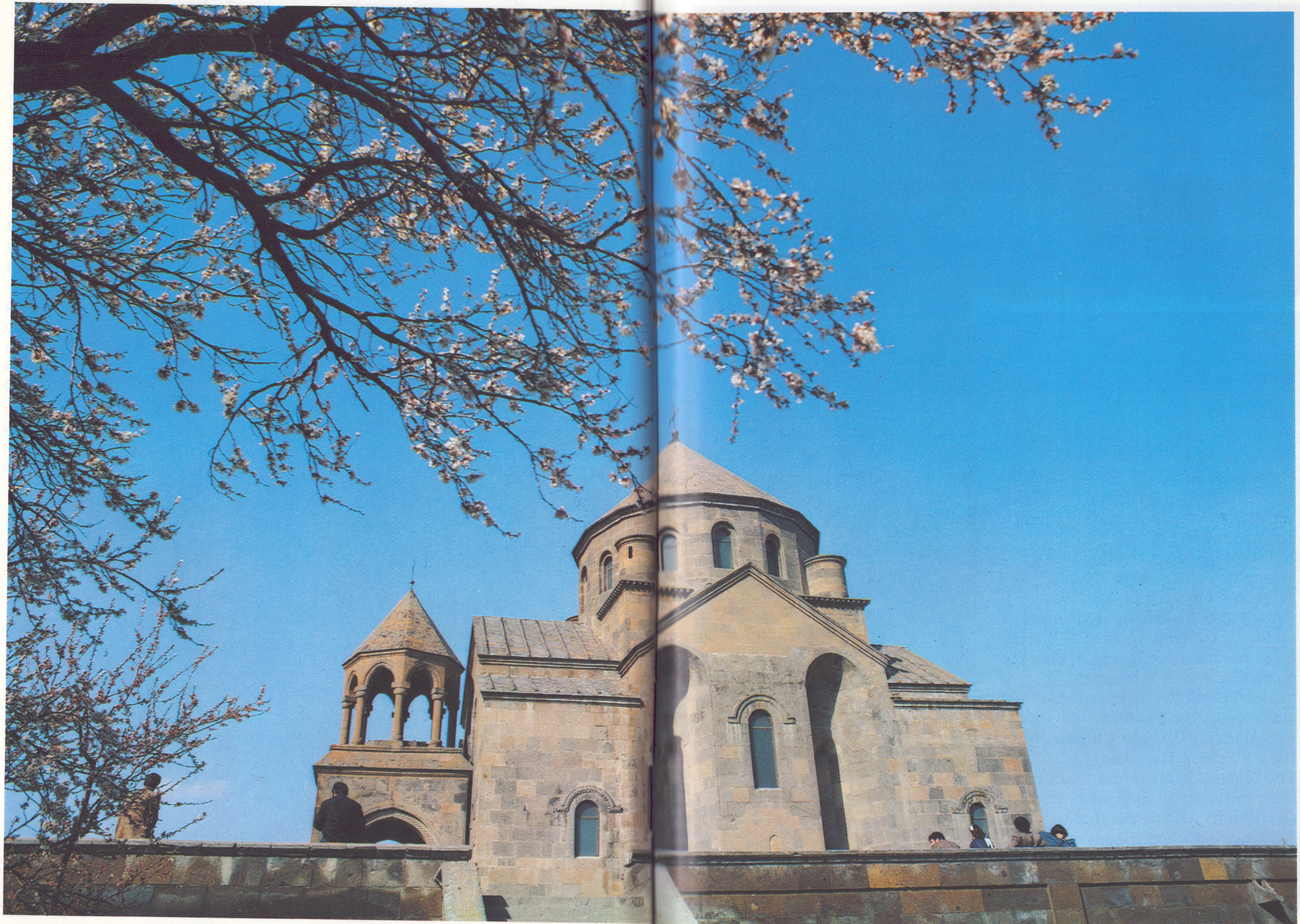
Gate of Tiridates

The cathedral belfry. 17th century

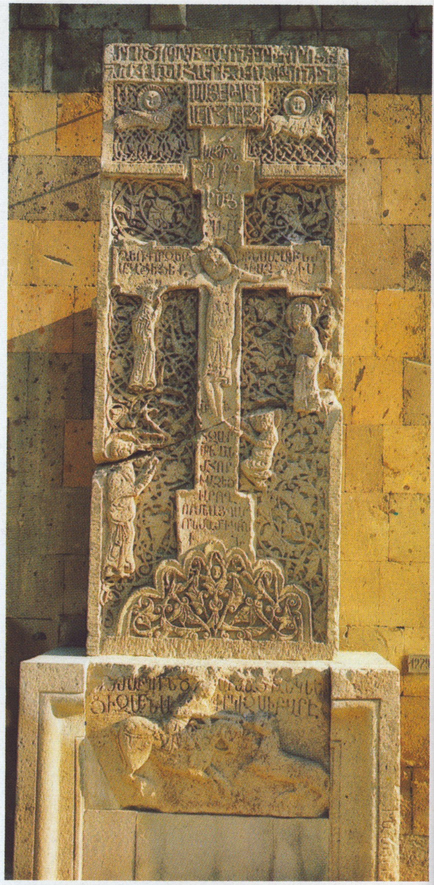
What we see of the cathedral today (the main part) was built in the 480s on the very spot of the ancient church which, legend says, was built at the time Armenia was converted to Christianity in the early 4th century. The structure has been renovated several times and bears distinct marks of the artistic trends of different epochs. Only the bases of the four pylons that support the latest structure remain of the original cathedral built in the 5th century. A belfry was added, then three rotundas, and a sacristy. In the 17th-18th centuries the cathedral walls were decorated with paintings by members of the famous Ovnatanyan family of artists. There is a museum attached to the cathedral where all kinds of relics, manuscripts, church plate and gifts are kept.

A gold cross and the state emblem of the Armenian SSR from the collection of the Echmiadzin Cathedral

Service at the cathedral



Echmiadzin is the centre of the Armenian Apostolic Church and all the Armenian eparchies, in the Soviet Union and outside it, owe it spiritual allegiance. The rite of myrrh-making is held here every seven years and thousands of believers assemble for the occasion from all parts of the world.
Near the cathedral is the residence of the incumbent patriarch, the Catholicos of all Armenians, Vazgen I. He was born in 1908 in Romania and was elected Catholicos in 1955. For his efforts to reinforce peace among nations, Vazgen I has been decorated with the USSR's orders of the Red Banner of Labour, of the Friendship of Nations and the Badge of Honour.
There is a kind of arch of triumph on the territory of the cathedral known as the "Gates of Tiridates" and processions from the residence of the Catholicos pass through it during church celebrations.
Echmiadzin has a theological seminary and issues a church magazine named *Echmiadzin*.
One of the most honoured saints of the Armenian Apostolic Church gives her name to a superb church, a masterpiece of Armenian medieval architecture, at the entrance to the town of Echmiadzin. It is the **Church of the Holy Virgin of Hripsime.**
The legend of Hripsime takes us back to the early days of Christianity. Hripsime fled to Armenia with her friends in order to escape the persecution of the Roman Emperor Diocletianus. On hearing of the beauty of the Roman lady, the Armenian King

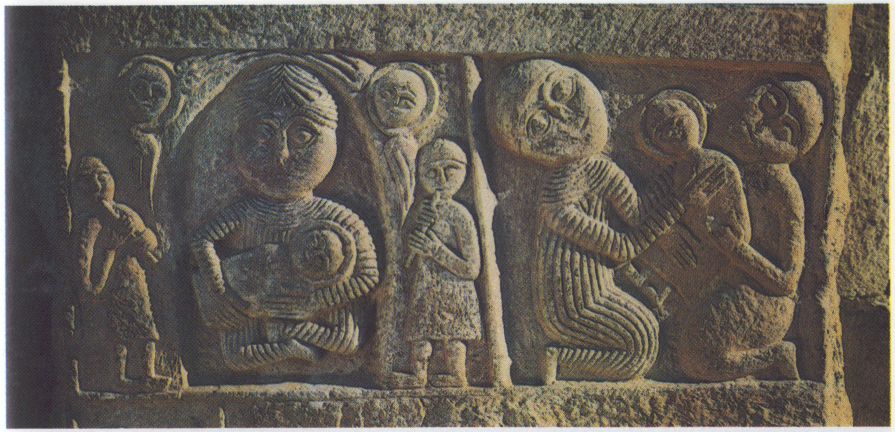


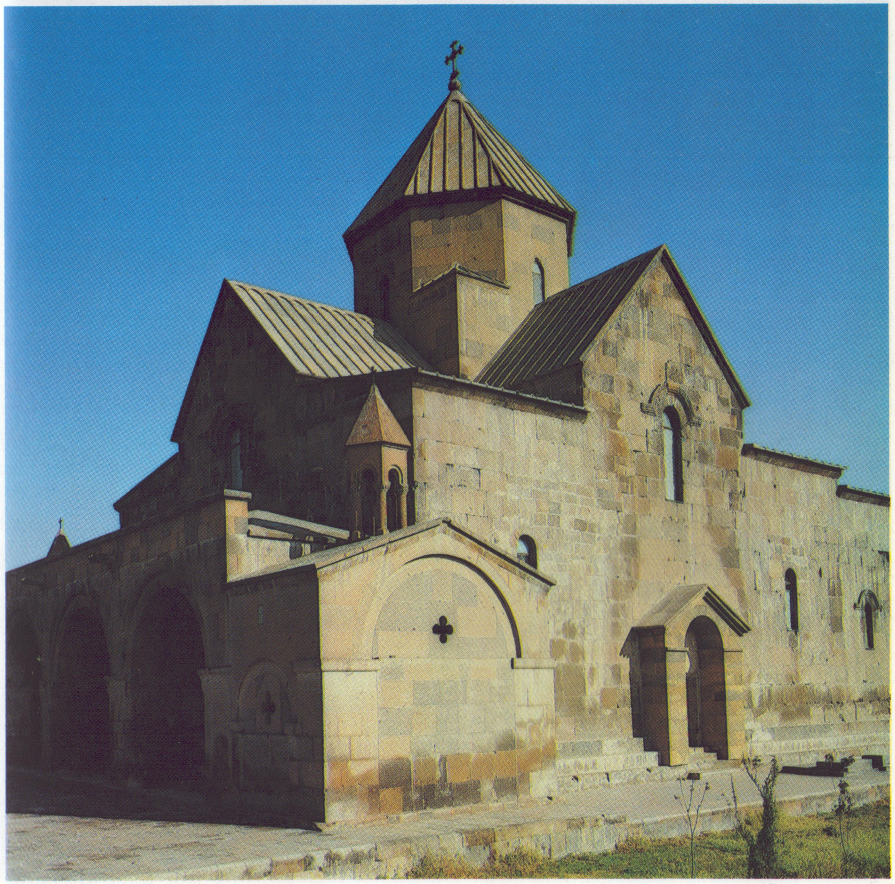
Pages 110-11
The Church of St. Hripsime. 618

The Saviour khachkar. 1279

Detail of the *khachkar* at the entrance to the residence of the Catholicos

The Church of St. Gayane. 630





Tiridates III ordered her to become his wife. But the Christian Hripsime could not bring herself to marry a pagan king and preferred the death of a martyr. A small chapel was erected where she was put to death. In the 7th century, Catholicos Komitas ordered the chapel pulled down and a majestic church was built in its place. The date the church was built (618) is recorded inside the church and outside, over its western entrance. Its clear-cut austerely majestic lines are very impressive and resemble a powerful fortress.

Another noteworthy historical structure in Echmiadzin is the **Church of St. Gayane** (630), built to honour Hripsime's wetnurse Gayane, who also died a martyr's death. It is located in a suburb in the south. Its tapering silhouette is etched on the snow white peak of Mt. Ararat in the distance. Unfortunately, the church has not retained its initial form. Only the interior has retained the austere purity of its original lines.

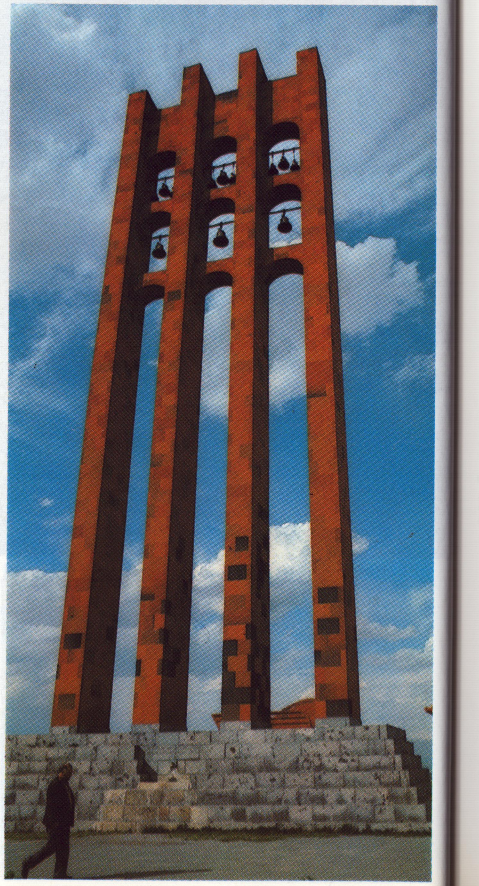
The ruins of the **church of Zwartnots** can be found about two kilometres from Echmiadzin. One of the architectural wonders of Armenia, Zwartnots was built in 641-61. It was said that a Byzantine emperor, who visited Armenia in 652, was so enchanted by its beauty he decided there and then that he wanted a church like

Pages 114-5
The ruins of Zwartnots Church. 7th century

Parts of Zwartnots Church. 7th century

it in his luxurious capital. But the architect who built Zwartnots, whose name is unfortunately unknown, died en route to Constantinople.

The church had been standing for about 300 years when a disastrous earthquake reduced it to a heap of rubble. But even the ruins of this grand structure give us an idea of its rare and majestic beauty. It is only by a great effort of imagination that we can assemble the stones of Zwartnots into a three-tiered church noted for the harmony of its architectural form and sculpted décor. The entire church and its façade were embellished with beautifully carved pomegranate branches, fruits, leaves and vines.



Sardarapat. Memorial to the Sardarapat Battle of 1918

The "Alley of Eagles"

The bell tower

Sardarapat Memorial

Victory Memorial Wall

Many rapturous testimonials, but not a single description of Zwartnots, have come down to us. The outlines of the church were construed by architect Toros Toramanyan, who started working at the excavation site in 1904. The church was a three-tiered pyramid-like composition, culminating in a cupola. It is unusual because the equilateral cruciform was built not into a rectangle but into a round many-faceted form. The original design had certain constructive shortcomings which were obvious when the earthquake struck. A small museum was opened in 1937 on the site of the excavations.

The items on display include an inscription made in Greek, by Catholicos Nerses III, on the construction of Zwartnots, a solar clock carved on a stone slab that was one of the decorations of the church, pottery and other finds.

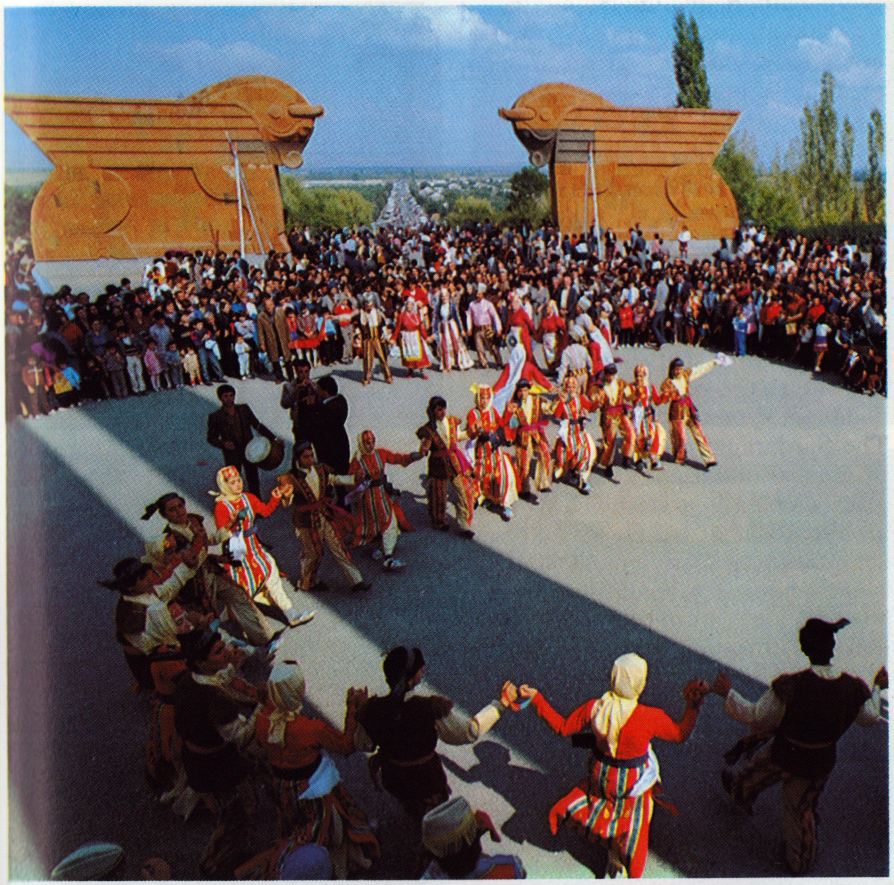
Another striking landmark of the Ararat Valley is the **Sardarapat Memorial** (25 kilometres from Echmiadzin).

In violation of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Soviet Russia, Turkish troops crossed the border in 1918 and attacked Alexandropol (Leninakan). The aggressor intended to crush Eastern Armenia and seize Transcaucasia. When Alexandropol fell, the Turkish Army poured into the Ararat Valley — the heart of Armenia. There was a major engagement at Sardarapat on May 22-26, where the Turkish Army was defeated and retreated.

A memorial park was laid out on the battlefield in 1968. The

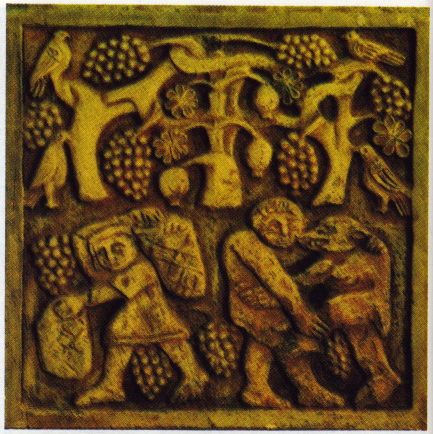
The Atsatun Bakery

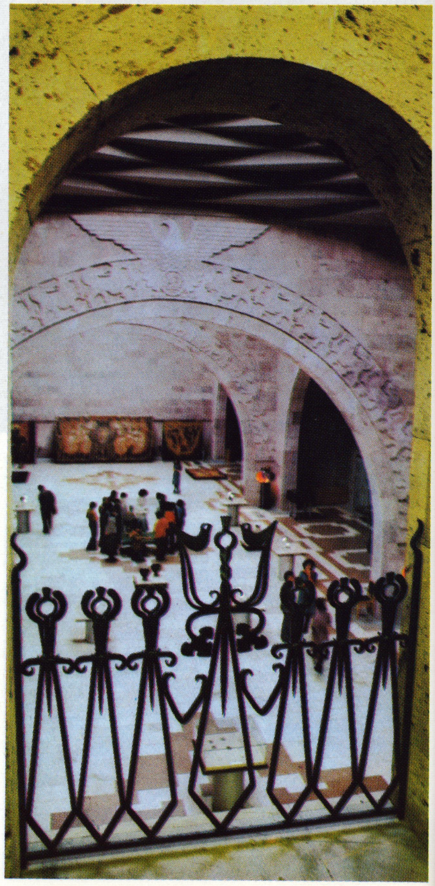
A folklore festival in Sardarapat



entrance is flanked by huge winged oxen made of red tuff. A flight of steps leads to a square from which a 35-metre-high bell tower rises. The beautiful trellis structure with its nine bells can be seen from afar. The bells ring every year on the day of the historic victory. A lane of eagles, symbolizing the spirit of the fearless fightingmen, leads to a curved Wall of Victory (length — 55 metres, height — 7 metres) with scenes of the battle, and the figure of a woman with a child — a symbol of revival.

The Sardarapat complex includes a restaurant and a cozy little hotel. The complex was designed by the architect Rafael Israelyan, and sculptors Ara Arutyunyan, Samvel Manasyan and Arsham Shaginyan. Visitors are also welcome to drop into the Museum of Ethnography of Armenia on the territory of the park.

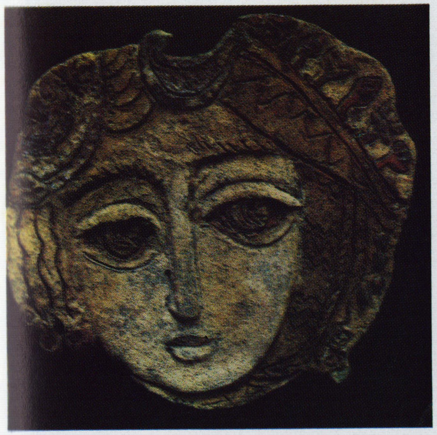


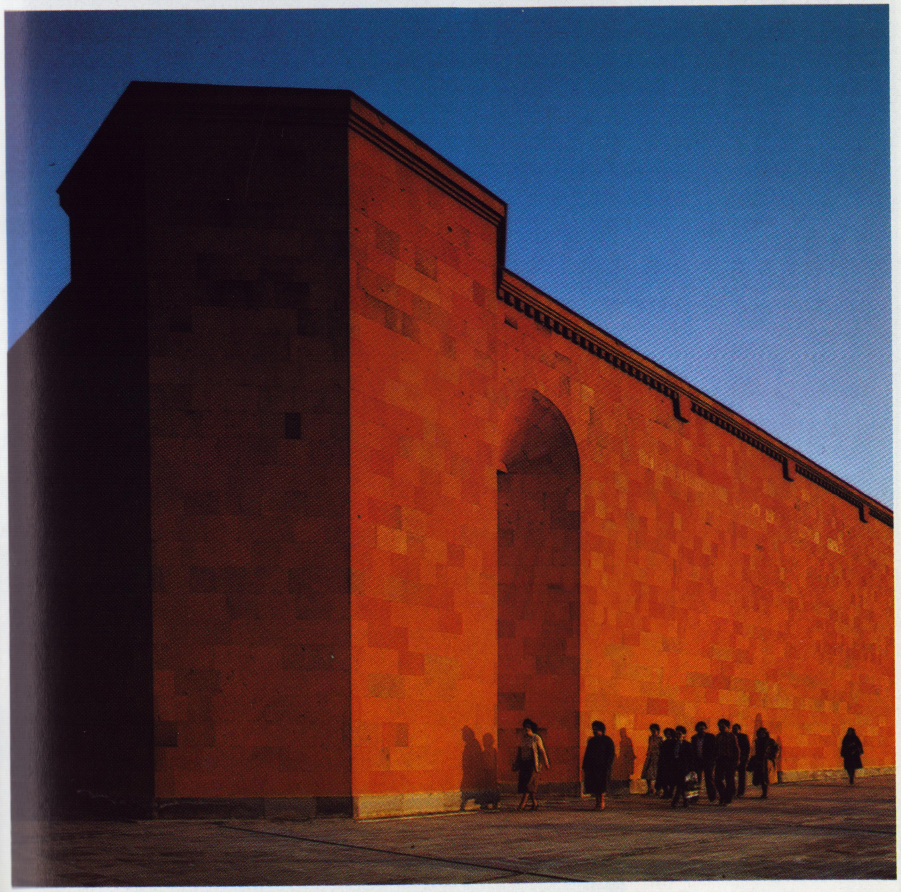


Sardarapat. The Ethnographic Museum of Armenia

Museum exhibits

The interior and exterior of the museum





TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

THE GARNI TEMPLE
THE GEGARD CAVE MONASTERY

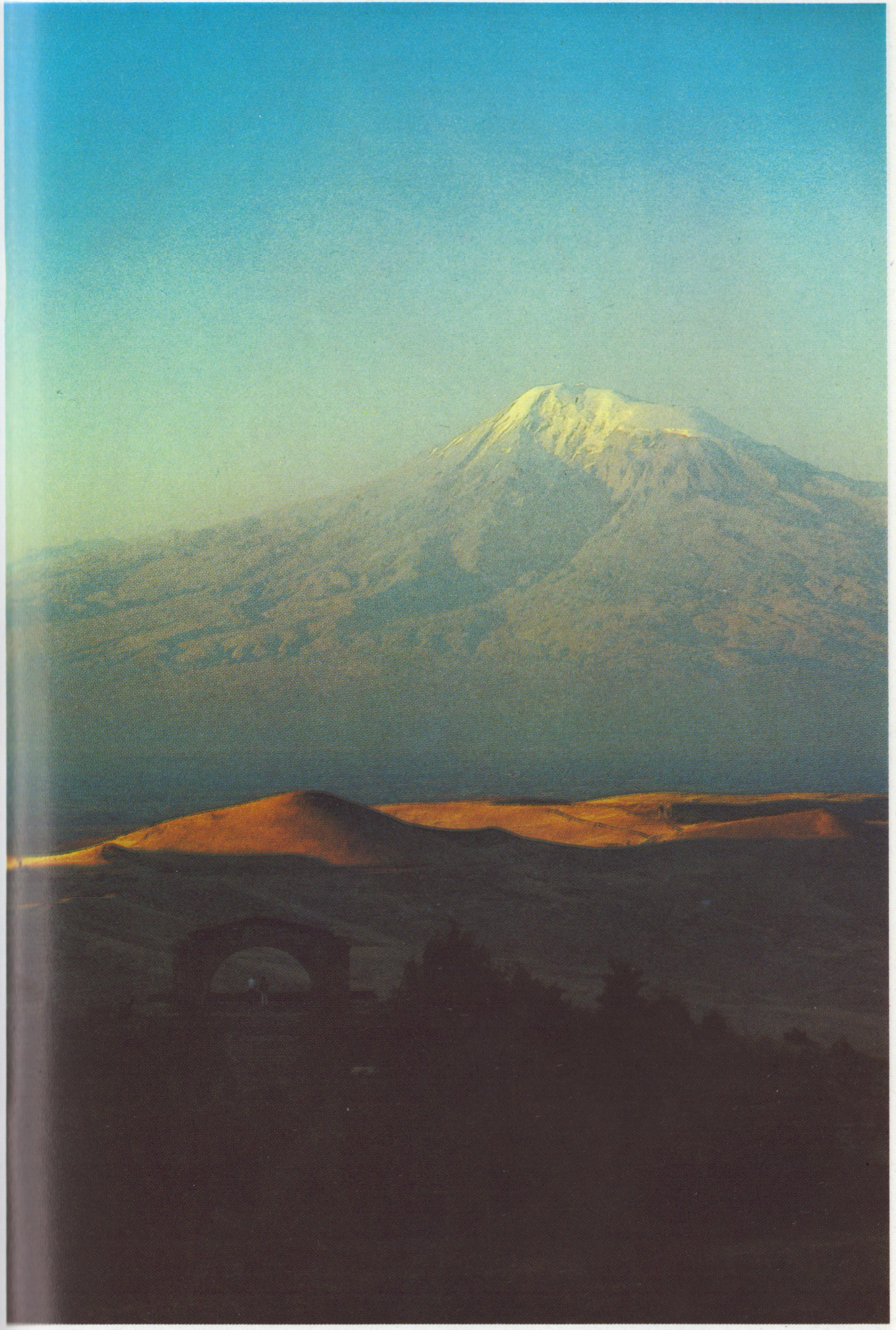
The Sun Temple of Garni is 28 kilometres from Yerevan. Once past the monument to Khachatur Abovyan, you turn right and travel up Myasnikyan Avenue. On a high plateau on your right you will see the outlines of the Nork housing development.

Halfway to Garni, on the right side of the road, is a **stone arch** on a hill. It was erected to the eminent Armenian Soviet poet Yegishe Charents (1897-1937), who used to gaze on Mt. Ararat from this spot, for the sight from here is breathtaking indeed. It is a sweeping, multi-coloured panorama crowned by the beautiful double-peaked mountain.

A few more minutes on the road and you arrive at one of the most ancient structures on Armenian territory—the **Garni architectural complex** (3rd century B.C.). What remains of a once mighty fortress is seen on a triangular plateau rising steeply for three hundred metres from the river Azat. This was the summer residence of the Armenian kings. The mighty basalt walls testify to the power of the lords they guarded, but even they were powerless in the face of treachery. The victim was King Mithdridates who died at the hands of his nephew. Though he had the support of the Roman Empire, the traitor did not reign long, and was overthrown with the aid of Parthia, a rival of the Roman Empire, and the throne went to Tiridates I. The powerful empire could not ignore this affront and sent its legions into the Ararat Valley. They razed Artashat, the capital of Armenia, to the ground. But soon fickle fortune changed sides and, quite unexpectedly, the troops of Tiridates I struck a devastating blow dissipating the Roman legions. But Tiridates realized that he would not survive unless he made his peace with the great Roman Empire, so he accepted Emperor Nero's offer to receive the crown of Armenia from his hands.

Mount Ararat

Overleaf
A view of Mt. Ararat from under the Charents Arch



The voyage to Rome took nine months and was a spectacular affair—the Armenian king being accompanied by a retinue of three thousand. The mission almost ended in failure, because the proud Tiridates, in violation of court etiquette, refused to disarm in the presence of the Emperor. The conflict was finally smoothed over, and Tiridates returned to Armenia a crowned king, with the 150 million dinars he had received as a gift from Nero, and with the artisans and builders who were to decorate his residence.

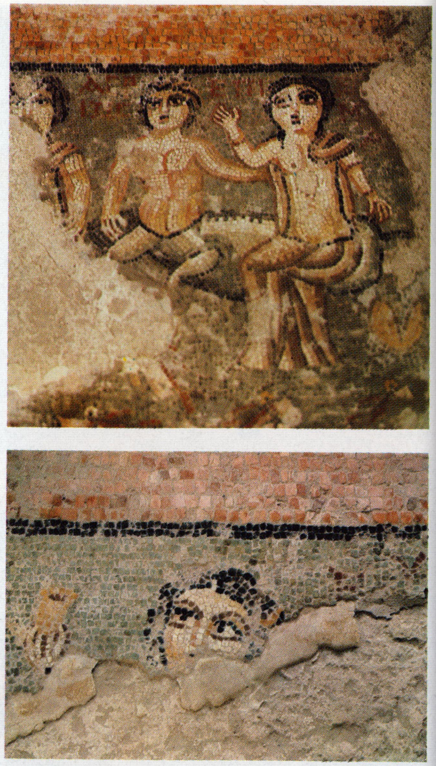
On returning home Tiridates started building a beautiful pagan temple—the Sun Temple—on the territory of Garni Fortress (1st century A.D.). The temple graced the hillside for 17 centuries, evoking wonder and delight with its perfect form and ethereal beauty until a major earthquake destroyed it in 1679. Almost three centuries were to pass before the prominent Russian orientalist Nikolai Marr and his colleague Yakov Smirnov discovered the ruins of the Sun Temple. In the 1930s Professor Nikolai Buniatov made a faithful reconstruction of the temple after a thorough study of its ruins. Restoration work was launched in 1966 and took ten years of hard work to complete. Alexander Sainyan was awarded the State Prize of the Armenian SSR for drawing up and supervising the project.

In the environs of Garni

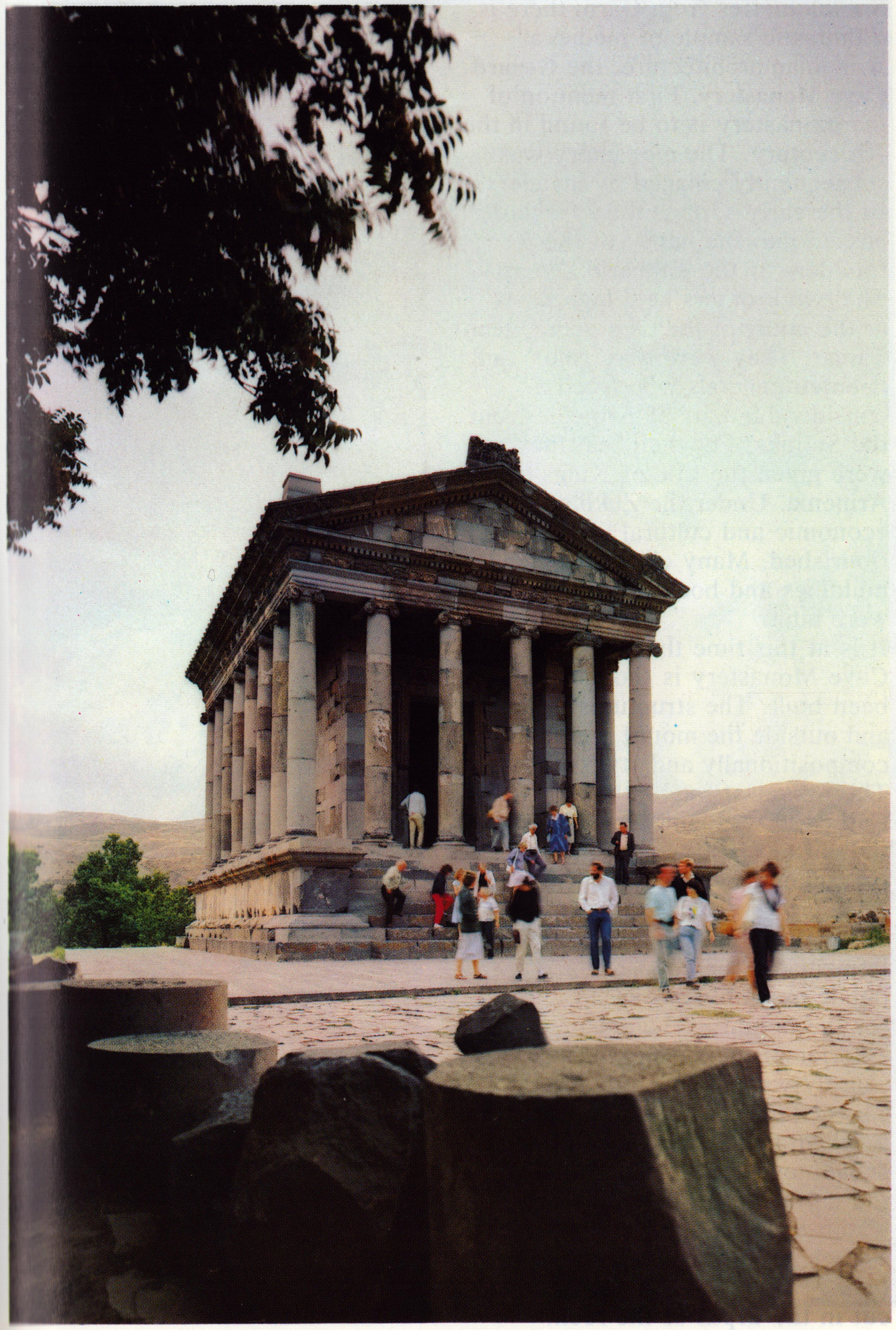
Now let us look at the temple more thoroughly. The frieze of the temple has leaves twined around lion masks which are so naturally rounded, that it is hard to believe they are carved in stone and not moulded. The architecture and the sculpture are inseparable here. The small square hall with the altar is surrounded by 24 columns with finely carved capitals. An intricately ornamented hipped roof tops this "temple of coolness", which was used as the summer residence of the kings of Armenia after the country was converted to Christianity.

The ruins of the huge palace and baths, built in the 3rd century in the Roman style, are very interesting. The baths were warmed by heated air which passed through ceramic pipes laid under the floor. In the semicircular part of the anteroom, a section of the mosaic floor has remained intact. A story from Greek mythology was taken for a design and was laid out in stones of 15 colours. There is an inscription in Greek which never fails to mystify visitors. It says: *We worked without remuneration.* Was it the complaint of slaves or was it the statement of master craftsmen who took pride in their work?

Archaeologists are still working on the Garni complex. They have discovered many interesting household items, fragments of antique marble statues, inscriptions in Greek, Aramaic and Armenian. Who knows what mysteries still lie hidden on the triangular plateau above the tumultuous river Azat!



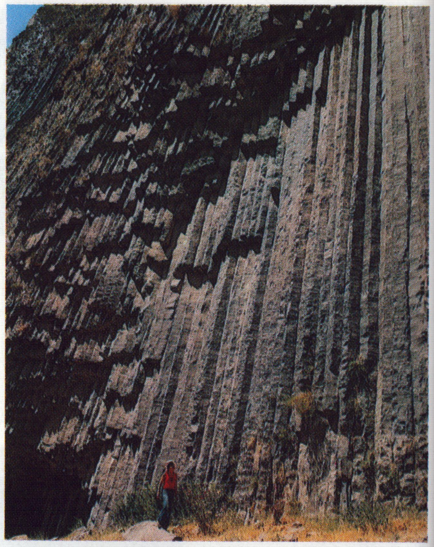
Garni. Details of the mosaic floor of the palace baths

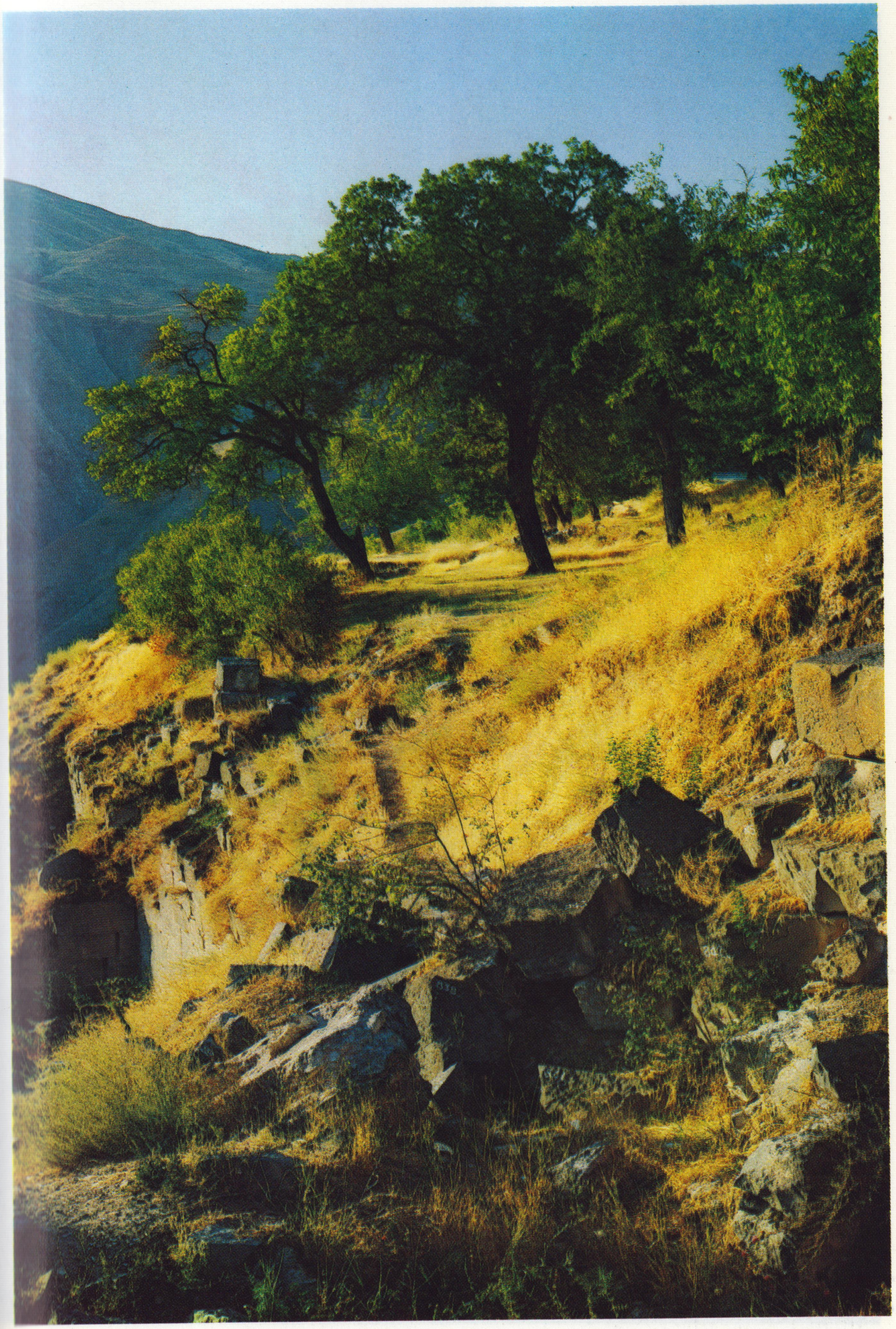


Garni Temple. 1st century

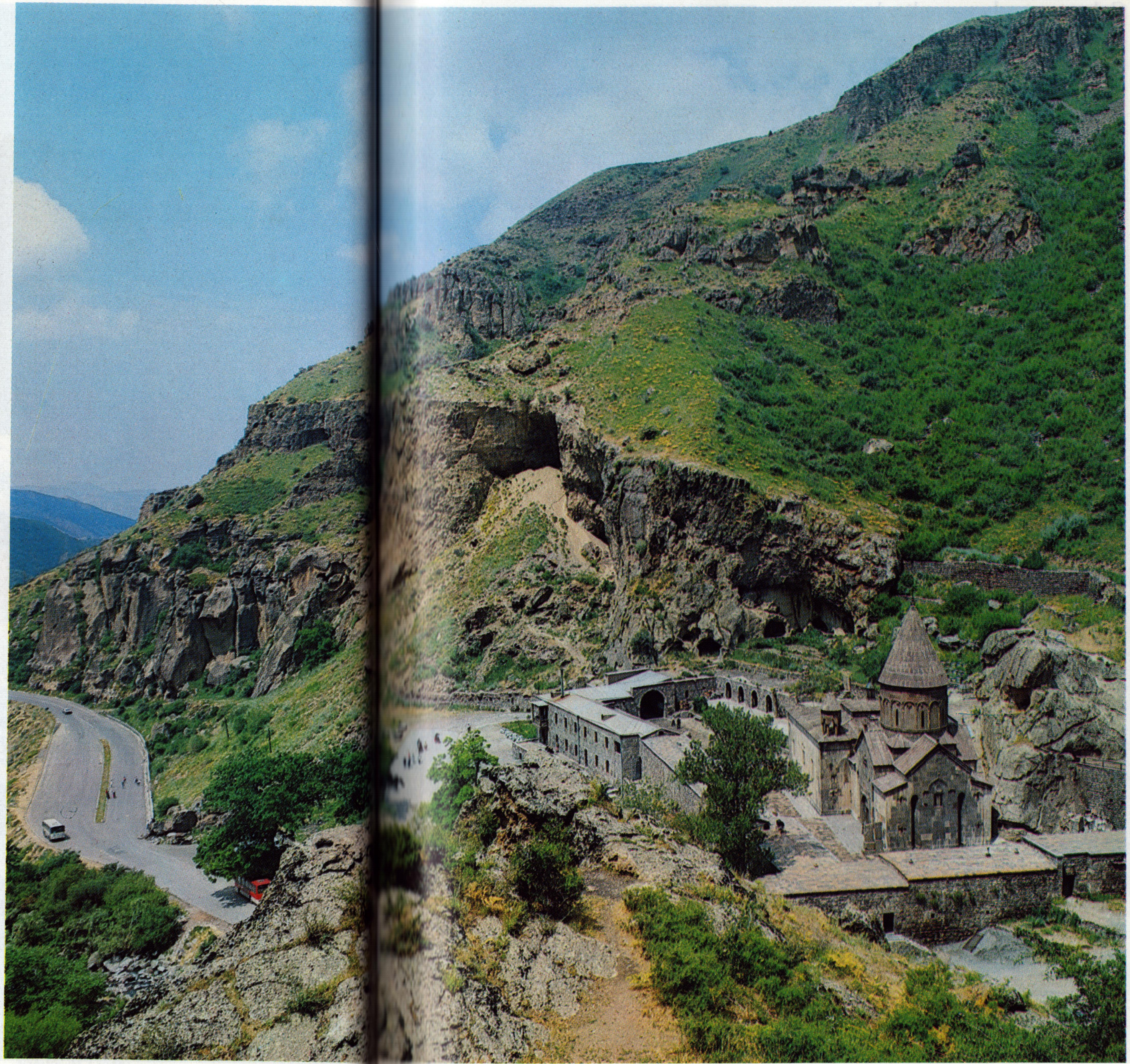
Six kilometres from Garni there is a fantastic sample of medieval Armenian architecture, the **Gegard Cave Monastery.** First mention of the monastery is to be found in the 4th century. The monastery was subsequently pillaged by invaders. In the early 13th century Gegard passed into the hands of the founders of the Zakharid Dynasty. The two brothers held high posts at the court of the Georgian Queen Tamar. They were wise rulers and talented generals who freed a considerable part of Armenia from the Seljuks. For their feat they were given the title of Kings of Armenia. Under the Zakharids economic and cultural life flourished. Many churches, secular buildings and book repositories were built.

It is at this time that the Gegard Cave Monastery is thought to have been built. The structures inside and outside the mount are one, compositionally and stylistically. The Astvatsatsin (Mother of God) Cathedral was built in 1215. Over the entrance is the coat-of-arms of the Zakharids—a lion tearing an ox apart. The narthex was added a few years later and was a typically Armenian structure—a place of public assembly and a burial place for the nobility. The austere exterior of the narthex contrasts sharply with its splendid interior. The ceiling is elaborately carved in a design that looks like undulating stalactites. The northern wall of the narthex is natural rock in which two passages have been cut. They lead to the most original part of the complex—the two churches cut in the depth of the rock.





Views of Garni



The Gegard Cave Monastery. 12th-13th centuries

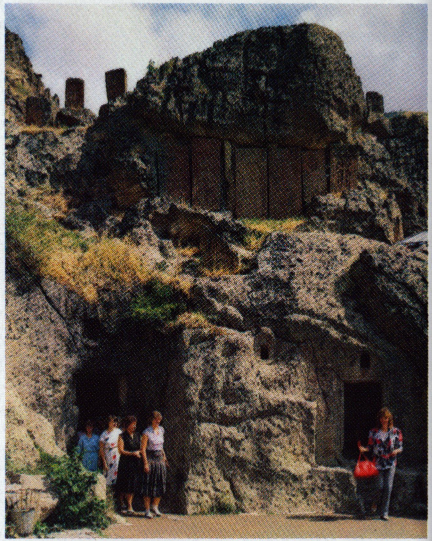
Columns, arches, vaults, bas-reliefs—everything was carved out of stone monolyth. But that is not all. A steep staircase runs up the exterior rock into a man-made tunnel which leads to an upper storey, or, to be more exact, to a rectangular vaulted hall.

The architect who conceived this remarkable structure is Galdzag. His name has been perpetuated by an inscription near a skylight.

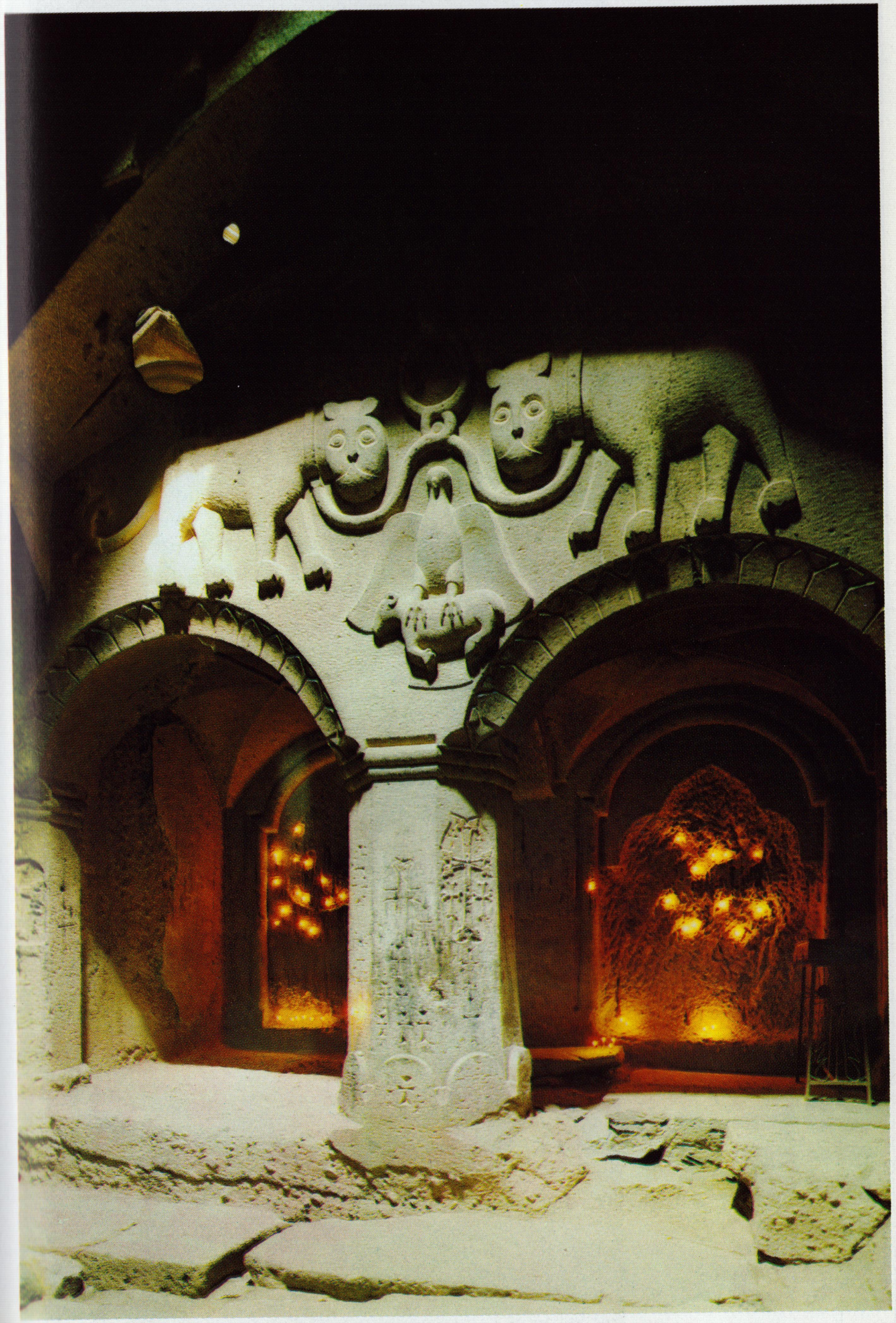
The name of the monastery was inspired by a legend about the spear with which the Roman soldier pierced the side of the crucified Jesus Christ. The spear was said to have been kept as a precious relic in Echmiadzin until the 9th century, when it was transferred for safekeeping to Airivank Monastery. The monastery was known from then on as Gegard, which means "spear" in Armenian.

In the environs of Yerevan you may have noticed some vertical carved stone slabs called *khachkars*—steles with a cross carved in an ornamental frame—the symbol of the tree of life. Such monuments are to be found only in Armenia. They served not only as tombstones, but were put up to commemorate all kinds of events: victories in battle, the founding of a city, and the laying of the foundation of some structure.

Gegard. The monastery wall



Entrance to the cave churches and burial vault



Narthex-cum-burial vault. Second half of 13th century

AT THE FOOT OF MT. ARAGATS

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

The Ashtarak District of Armenia lies at the foot of Mt. Aragats, 35 kilometres to the northwest of Yerevan, along the Ashtarak Highway.

Aragats, the highest mountain in Armenia, is an extinct volcano which has a circumference of 200 kilometres. The highest of its four peaks (the northern peak) is 4,090 metres, the remaining three are slightly lower.

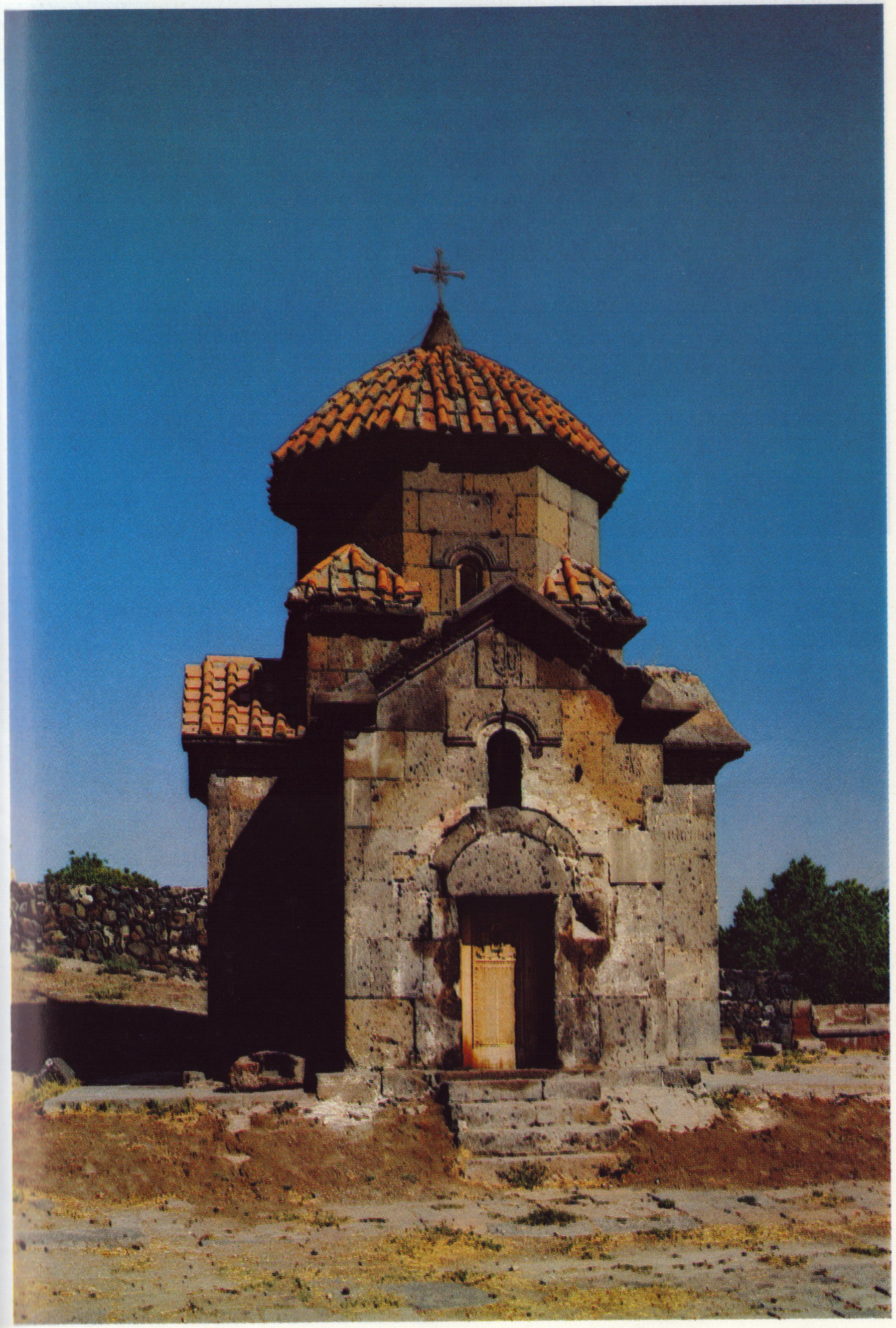
Aragats is an inexhaustible reservoir of water. It is covered with snow virtually all the year round and gives rise to endless streams and brooks.

The beauty of the mountain has been a source of inspiration to poets and artists, and has been mentioned in tales, songs and legends. Its picturesque glens, cliffs and babbling brooks never cease to amaze. The sky in summer is an almost unbelievable blue and everything seems to be in blossom, even the rocks and boulders look as though they have come alive. But it is the brilliance of the flowers and their number that is the most remarkable thing about Aragats.

The slopes and foothills of the mountain have been inhabited since time immemorial. Here, people found everything they needed: water to drink and to irrigate their fields, pastures for cattle, stones to make implements and to build homes, and, finally, inaccessible rocks to protect them from foes.

The southern slopes of Aragats are visible from the highway as it approaches Ashtarak, the regional

The bridge across the river Kasakh. 17th century


Karmravor Church. 7th century

Am-Berd Fortress. 11th-13th centuries

centre which spans the two cliffy banks of the river Kasakh. This verdant town is believed to be one of the most ancient sites where primitive man settled.

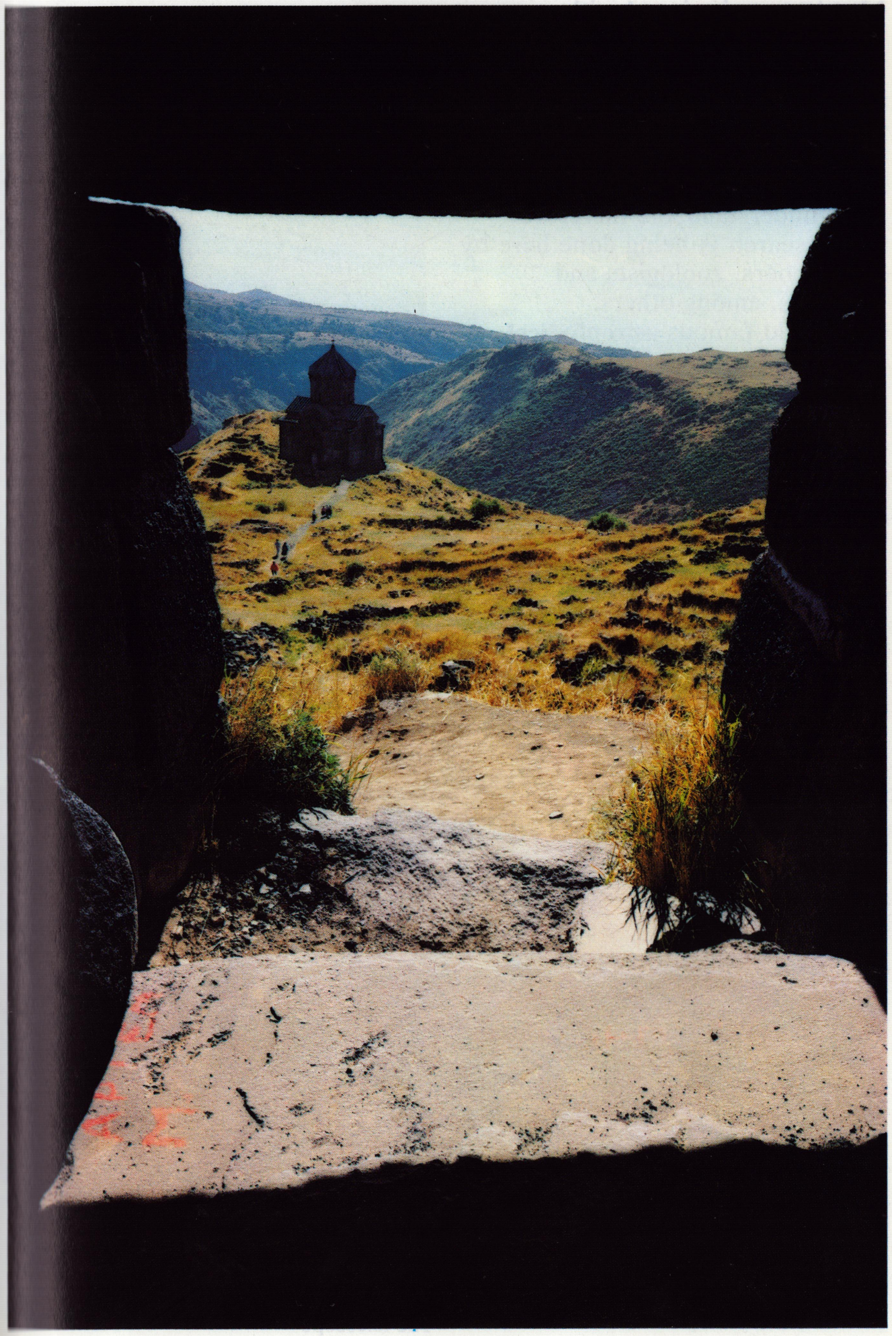
Tsiranavor (orange-coloured) **Church,** is the oldest structure to be found in these parts. This 5th-6th-century basilica is a marvelous illustration of the grand scale on which the early churches were built.

A short walk from Tsiranavor Church will bring you to **Karmravor** (red-coloured) **Church,** a small pendentive built in the 7th century as a palace chapel. Its elegance and perfect proportions are a feast for the eye. An ancient tiled spherical roof, common to all ancient structures, has remained intact. It was only in the 9th century (when thin tuff tiles became available) that spherical roofs were replaced by conical.

Another interesting landmark in the town is an old **three-arch bridge** dating back to the 17th century. It has a stepped parapet of tuff.

Of the other tourist attractions on the southern slopes of Aragats, the **Am-Berd Fortress** merits special mention. It was built at a height of 2,300 metres above sea level in the 11th-13th centuries in strict accordance with the art of building fortifications. The walls are of roughly hewn rock cemented with mortar. The fortress had a reliable defensive system. The church, built by the architect Vagram Pakhlavuni in 1026, is the best preserved part of Am-Berd.

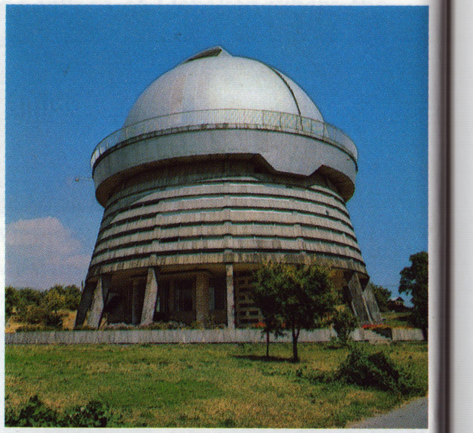
Following the river Kasakh southwards, the traveller arrives in the village of Oshakan where the enlightener Mesrop Mashtots, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, lies entombed in a local church. He died in 440 in Vagarshapat and his remains were brought to the village of Oshakan, the estate of his best friend Prince Vagram Amatuni. A basalt monument to Mesrop Mashtots in the form of an open book inscribed with the Armenian alphabet has been put up in the village.

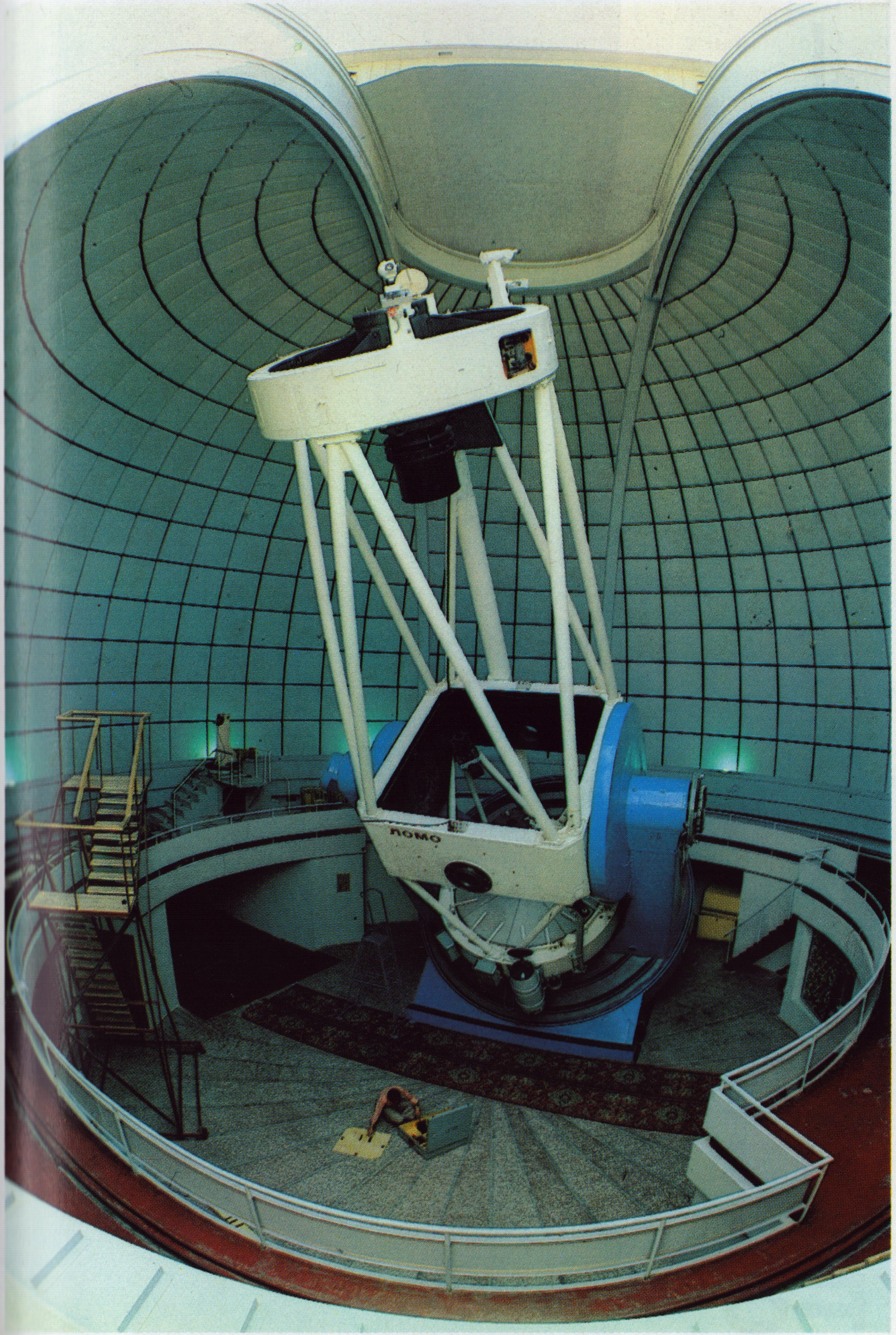


Am-Berd Fortress. The church. 1026

Mt. Aragats is ringed with different climatic zones ranging from semi-desert to alpine tundra. Each of these zones has soils, plants, animals and climatic conditions that are unlike their counterparts in other zones. It is quite understandable therefore, that research is being done here by geographers, zoologists and botanists, among others.

The world-famous **astrophysical observatory** is located in the village of Byurakan at the foot of Mt. Aragats. The observatory was opened in 1946 and was equipped with sophisticated optical instruments and radiotelescopes for probing the depths of outer space. Much of the research, done at the observatory under the guidance of Dr. Victor Ambartsumyan of the USSR Academy of Sciences, has won world-wide acclaim and has contributed greatly to the development of modern astrophysics and stellar astronomy.





The Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory.
The main tower

The offices

The telescope

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

THE LOVELY MOUNTAIN COUNTRY OF LORI

If you want to have an even better idea of what Armenia is like, we suggest you take a trip to the northern part of the republic, to Lori, a mountain country of unparalleled beauty, a realm of forest-covered mountains, of dizzy gorges and bubbling rivers. It covers about one-fifth of Armenia's territory.

This is the main copper-producing region of the Transcaucasia. It is also a highly-developed agricultural area.

Kirovakan, the capital city of Lori (120 kilometres from Yerevan) was badly hit by the December 1988 earthquake. Before the disaster there were 170,000 people living in the city. A big industrial centre, the city was also a health resort with sanatoriums and holiday hotels.

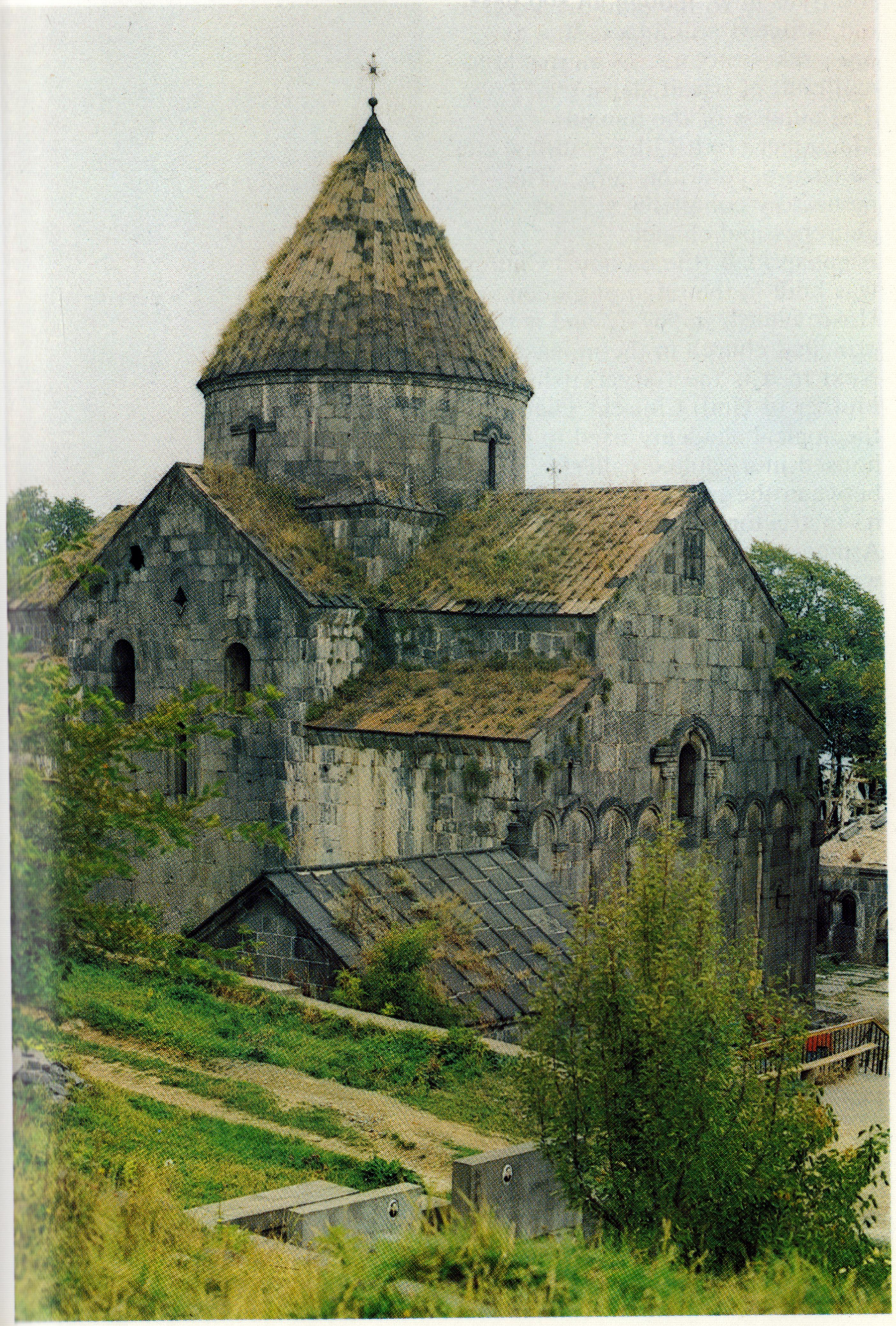
Building teams from the Ukraine, Georgia, Belorussia and Kazakhstan came to Kirovakan to help build new houses. To improve the ecological situation in the area the destroyed chemical facilities will be restored and transformed into other production.

The **town of Alahverdy** is situated 70 kilometres from Kirovakan in the Debed River valley.

The town appears suddenly on the steep slopes of the river gorge, and descends gingerly to the turbulent river and the railway.

Before the First World War, Alahverdi was a major producer of copper ore in Russia. Today it ranks third, after the Urals and Kazakhstan.

At Alahverdi Station the motorway crosses to the right side of the river Debed. A new bridge spans



Sanain Monastery. 10th-13th centuries

the river now, though an 800-year-old bridge is still intact. It is a one-arch structure, 18 metres long and built of basalt slabs.

The cupolas of the **Sanain Monastery** (10th-13th centuries) can be seen beyond the gorge. The monastery comprises several churches and chapels.

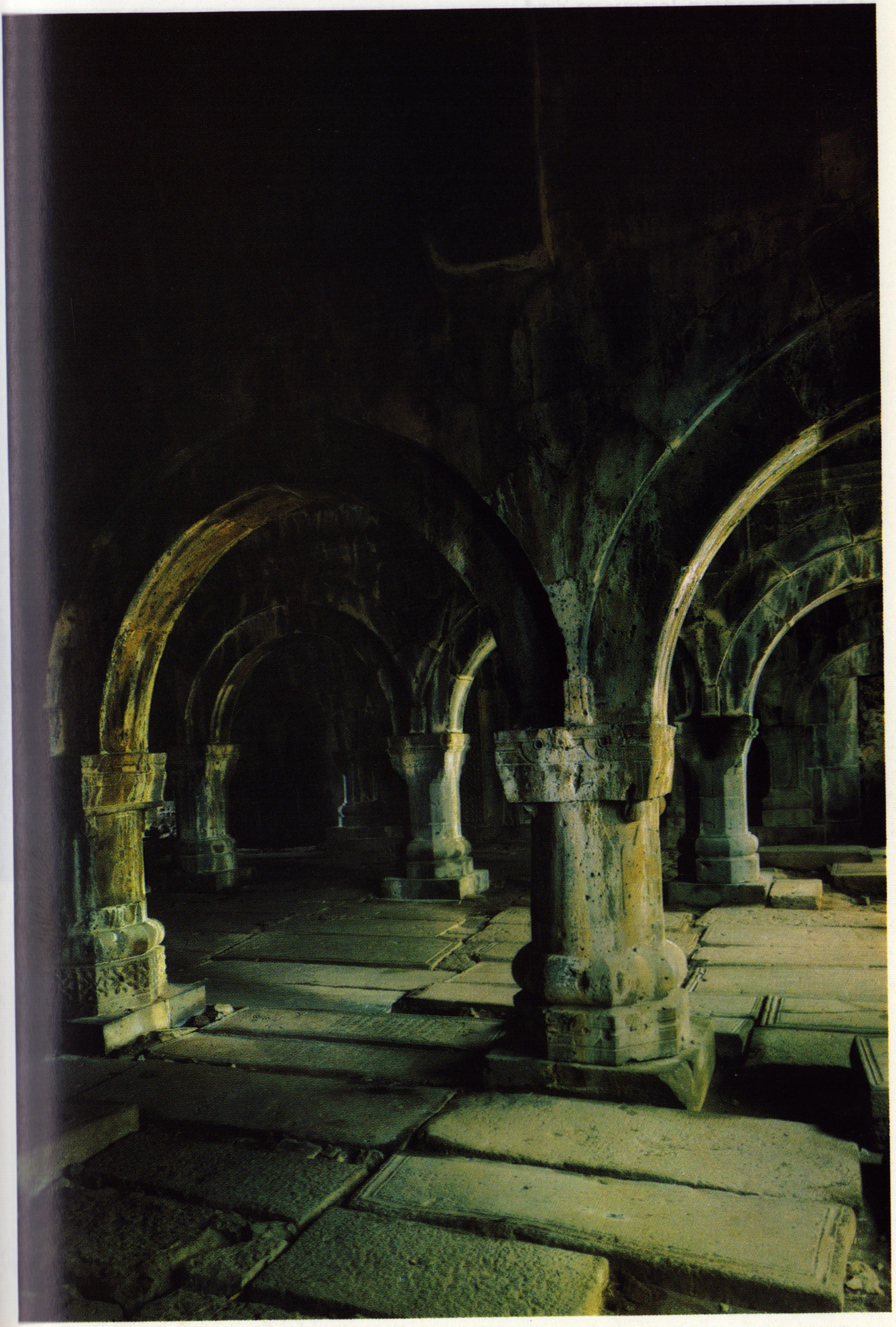
Amenaprkich (the Saviour) Church was built in the reign of Queen Hosrovanush in 967-72 and is the principal church in the monastery.

Next to it is the Astvatsatsin (the Mother of God) Church. The theological academy used to be housed in a vaulted gallery between the two churches. One of its instructors was the eminent Armenian scholar, philosopher and writer of the 11th century Grigor Magistros. The library building is still intact. Niches in the thick walls were used for storing books and the semi-columns are covered with fine carving depicting reptiles and birds.

Another major attraction in these parts is the **Akhpat Monastery** (10th-13th centuries). The central structure here is the 10th-century Church of St. Nshan. The building is massive yet elegant. Its ceiling is decorated with sculptured ornament, and the inner walls are covered with frescoes. The church is one of the outstanding samples of medieval Armenian architecture. The architect is believed to be Trdat, who built Ani, the former capital of Armenia.

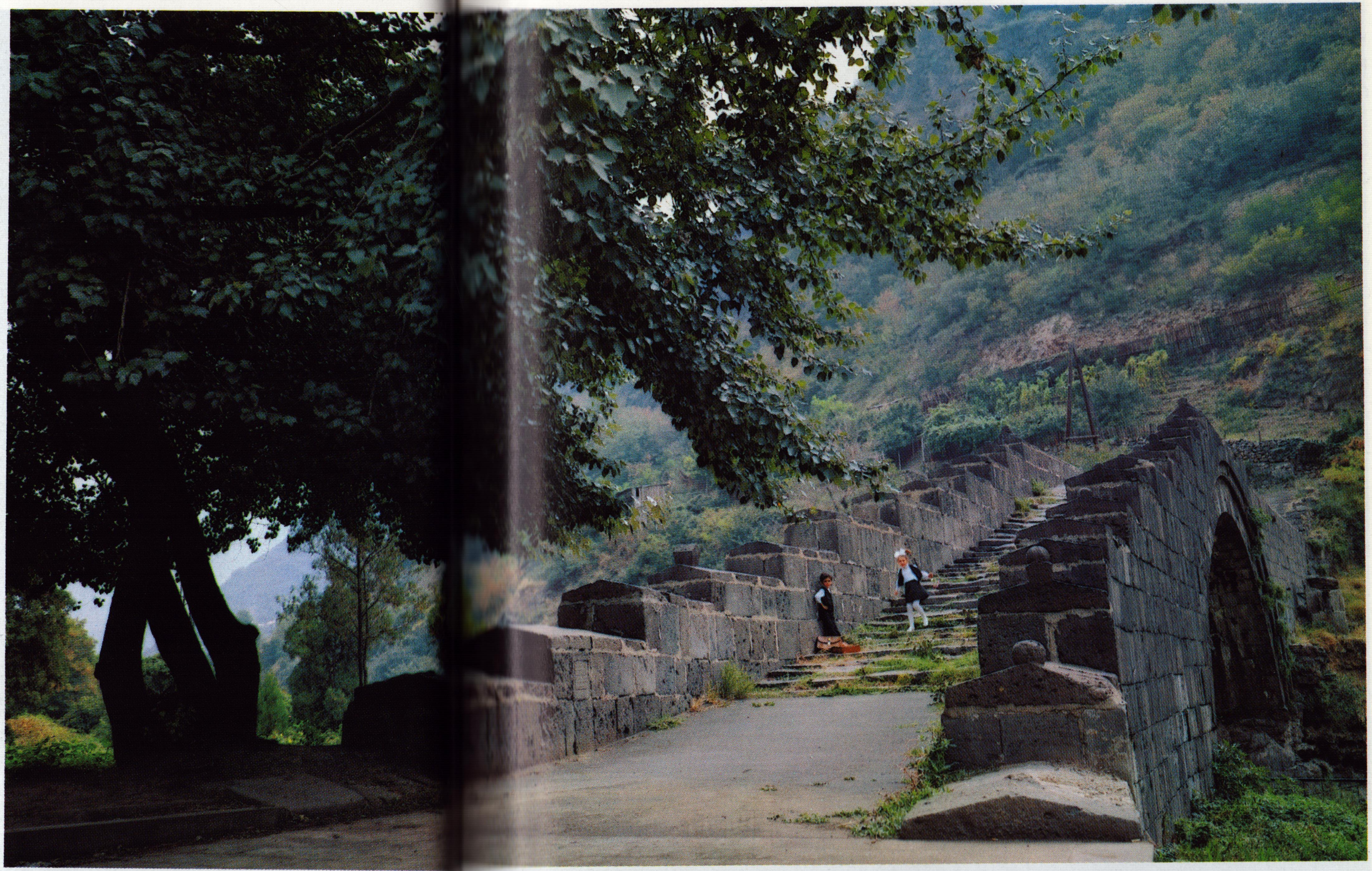
Just as in Sanain, there was a wonderful library in Akhpat Monastery. The learned monks tried to acquire everything written

Sanain Monastery. A tombstone

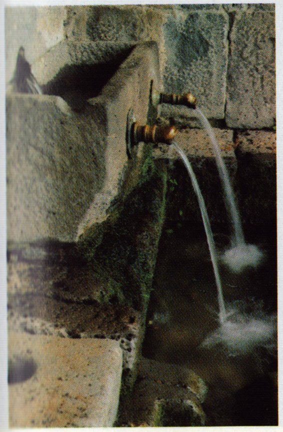


Interior of the monastery

in the Armenian language and, whenever the need arose, they made copies of books found in other monasteries. Akhpat Monastery was plundered several times by invaders, and in the 12th century, during the invasion of the Seljuks, part of the library was hidden away in caves. The manuscripts were again hidden during a Persian incursion in 1795. Whatever was rescued was subsequently transferred to the Matenadaran in Yerevan. The refectory, the largest structure of this kind to be found in Armenia—340 square metres—stands next to the monastery library.



The bridge across the river Debed near Sanain. Late 12th century



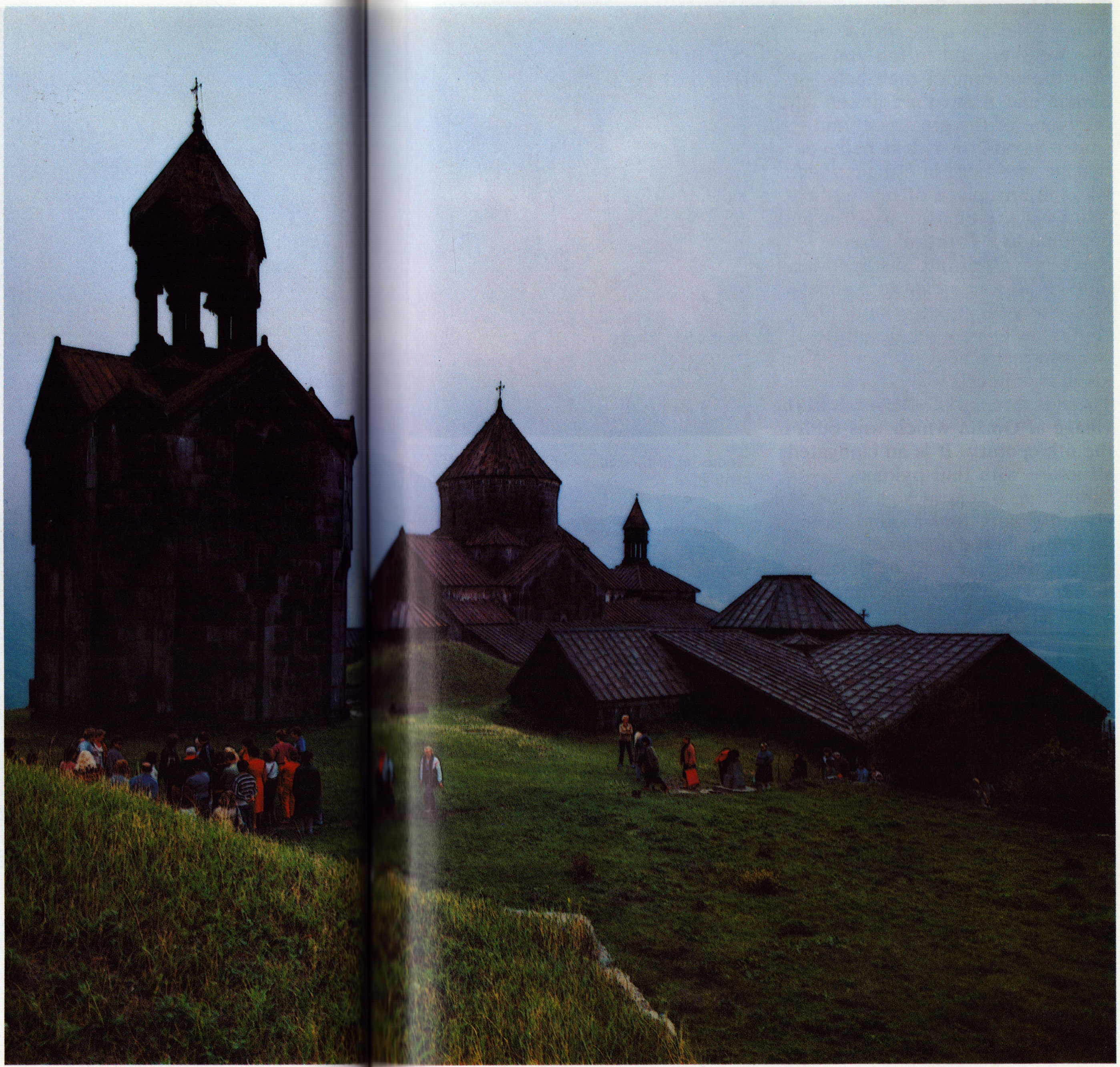
A medieval spring

Pages 158-9
A view of the village of Akhpat

Akhpat Monastery. 10th-13th centuries

Akhpat Monastery. The bell tower. 13th century

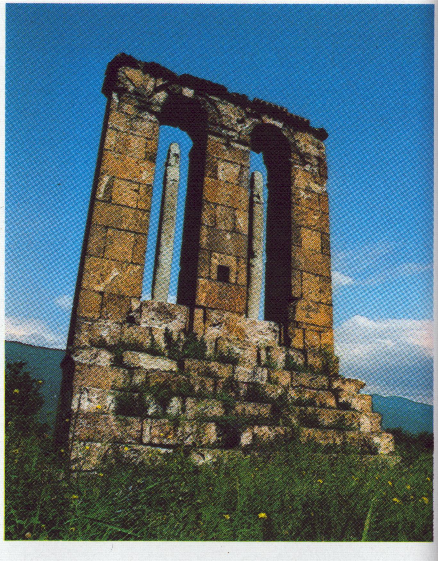
Interior of the bell tower

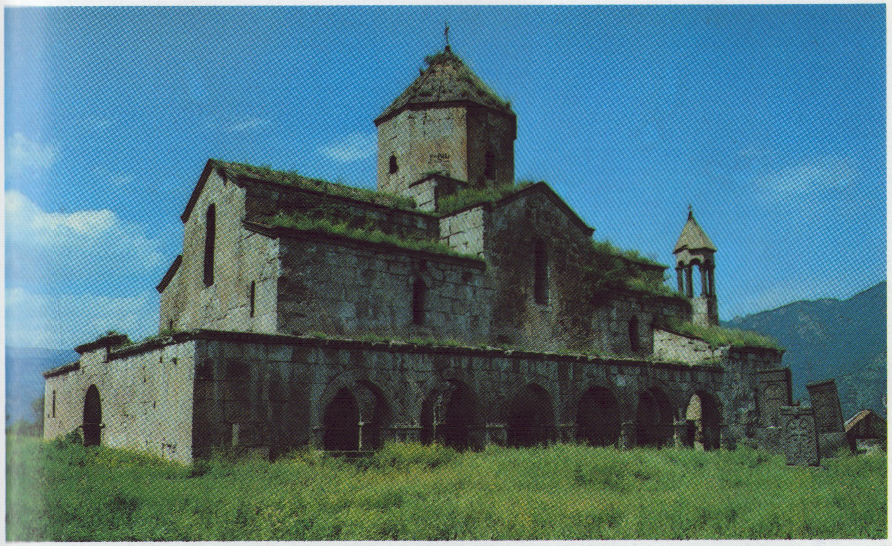


Akhpat Monastery. 10th—13th centuries

The Akhpat and Sanain monasteries are quite visible in fine weather. But in fog you may hear the chiming of their bells. Sanain and Akhpat are linked with the name of the great poet and singer Sayat-Nova. It is believed that he was born in Sanain which was the birthplace of his mother. After his exciting life in Tiflis and his fame as a court minstrel, Sayat-Nova fell into disfavour and in 1775 he was exiled to Akhpat Monastery. Even as a monk, he continued to play his favourite stringed instrument — the *saz* — in his monastic cell.

There is a remarkable **church in the village of Odzun** which was built in the 6th century. It is an elongated structure with four pylons supporting a central high dome. An arched gallery runs around three of its walls. To the north of the church there are also a 6th-century memorial and two medieval cemeteries with *khachkars* and tombstones.


Memorial in the village of Odzun. 6th century


The church in the village of Odzun. 6th century

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

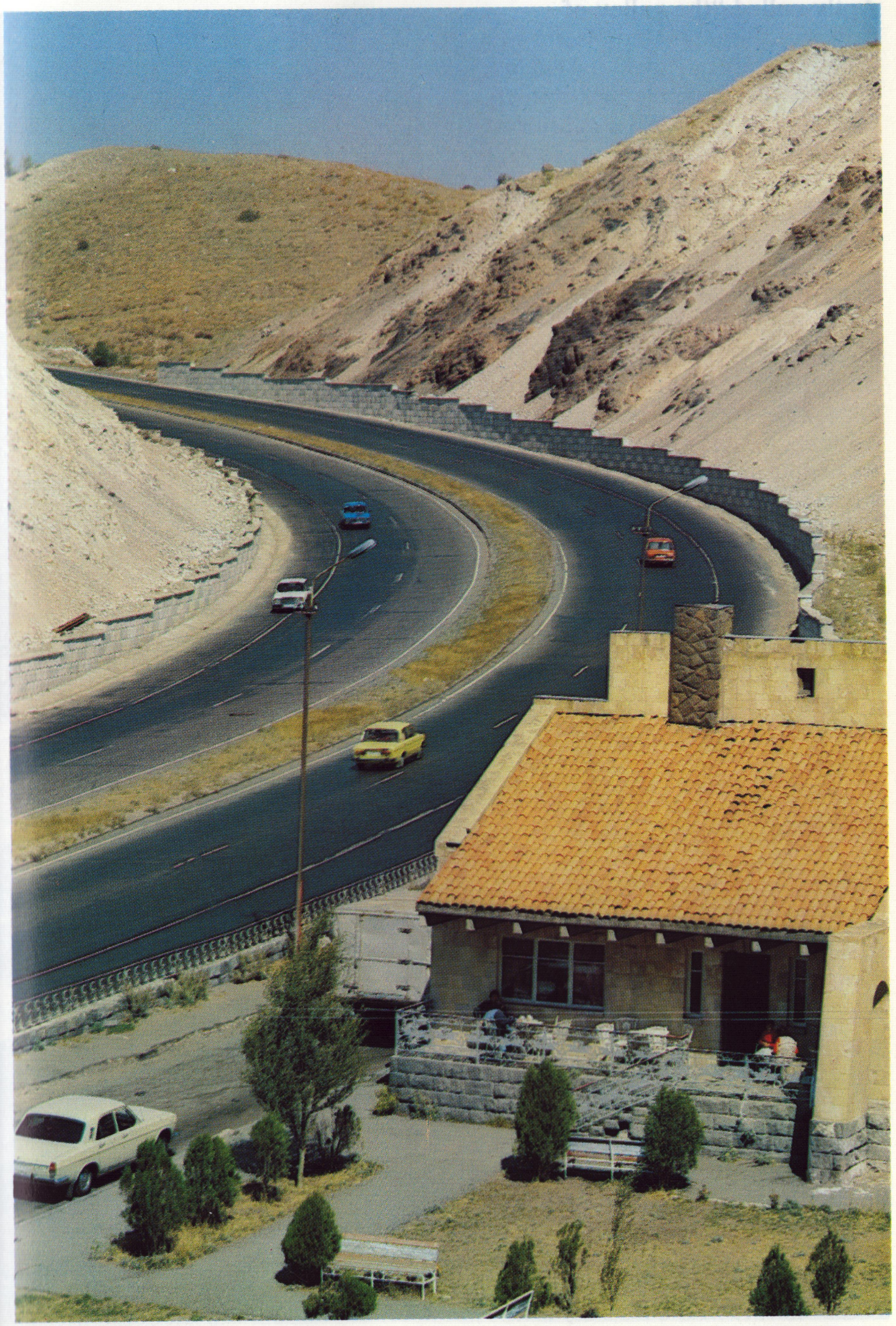
LAKE SEVAN, THE GEM OF ARMENIA

The trip to Lake Sevan is, undoubtedly, one of the most exciting in Armenia. This wonder of Nature is located 60 kilometres from Yerevan up a highway which cuts northward through mountains and rocks. This is the road which links Armenia with its neighbours, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The altitude and mountains make travelling very pleasant in these parts for the air is pure and cool even in the hottest months in comparison with the stuffy heat of the city.

When you arrive in the town of Razdan, 50 kilometres from Yerevan, you will know that the **village of Tsakhkadzor** is close by.

The statue of an eagle on the Sevan Highway

A tea-house by the highway



Aptly called “the valley of flowers”, Tsakhkadzor is set in a forest at the foot of Mt. Tegenis. This is where the Central Sports Complex of the USSR is located—a township with gyms, a football field, courts for basketball, volleyball, and tennis, and swimming-pools. In winter a chair-lift takes skiers up Mt. Tegenis. The thing to do in Tsakhkadzor is to drop into the **Kecharis Monastery** (11th-13th centuries), a mere 10 to 15 minutes’ walk from the sports complex, to see some wonderful specimens of medieval Armenian architecture. The oldest structure in the monastery, the Church of St. George, was built in the year 1003. There is a small chapel of the 11th century nearby and in the southern part of the complex—the 13th-century Katogike Church.

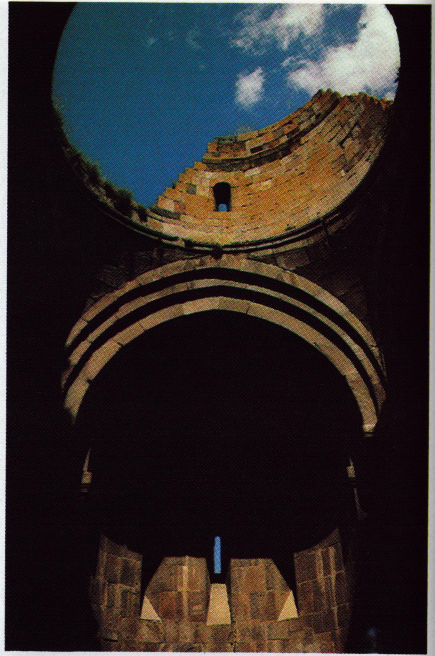
But let us continue on our journey to Lake Sevan.

Tsakhkadzor. A view of a holiday hotel

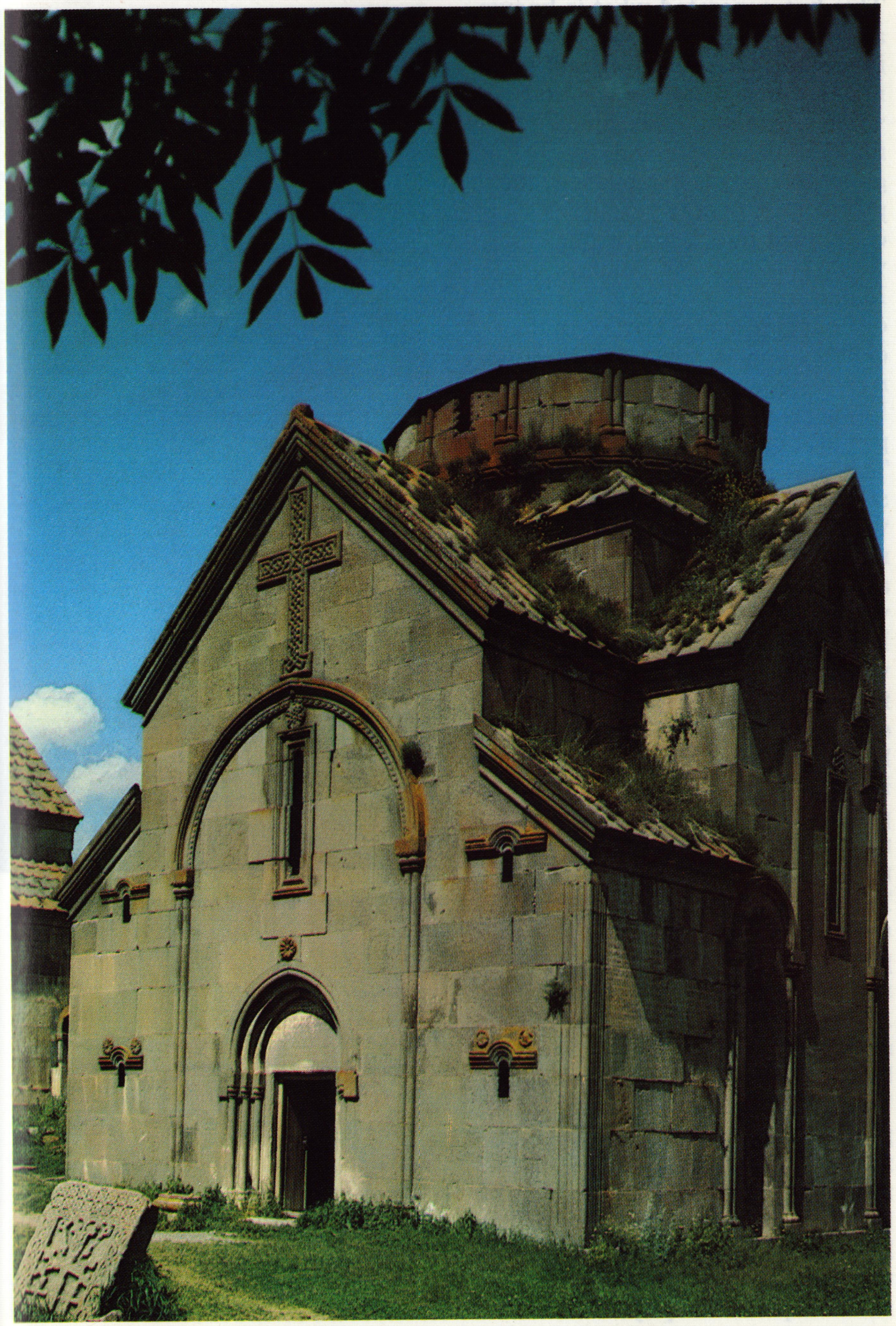
The gentle turquoise of Sevan's waters is always astonishing: the lake is so austere and majestic. It fills a gigantic depression situated at a height of almost 2,000 metres above sea level. Maxim Gorky once said of its waters that they were like a piece of sky that had descended to the earth among the mountains.

The mystery of Sevan's origin has not been fully solved. Some specialists believe that the bowl of the lake is the crater of an extinct volcano, while others think that millions of years ago volcanic lava formed a natural reservoir trapping the water inside. There are many hypotheses of this kind.

The problem which scientists are worried about today is not so much the origin of Lake Sevan as the fact that its water level has fallen almost 19 metres over the past 40 years and that, in shallow places, the water has receded several kilometres from its shores.



Tsakhkadzor. Kecharis Monastery. 11th-13th centuries



This has generated what is known as the "Sevan problem". Armenia is short of energy resources. It is not rich in coal, oil or gas and when the republic became industrialized, after Soviet government was established, the problem of energy resources developed into a major one. This was when engineer Sukias Manaseryan's project was taken out of moth balls. Earlier in the century he had suggested that the river Razdan, which flows out of Lake Sevan, should be used to produce electricity.

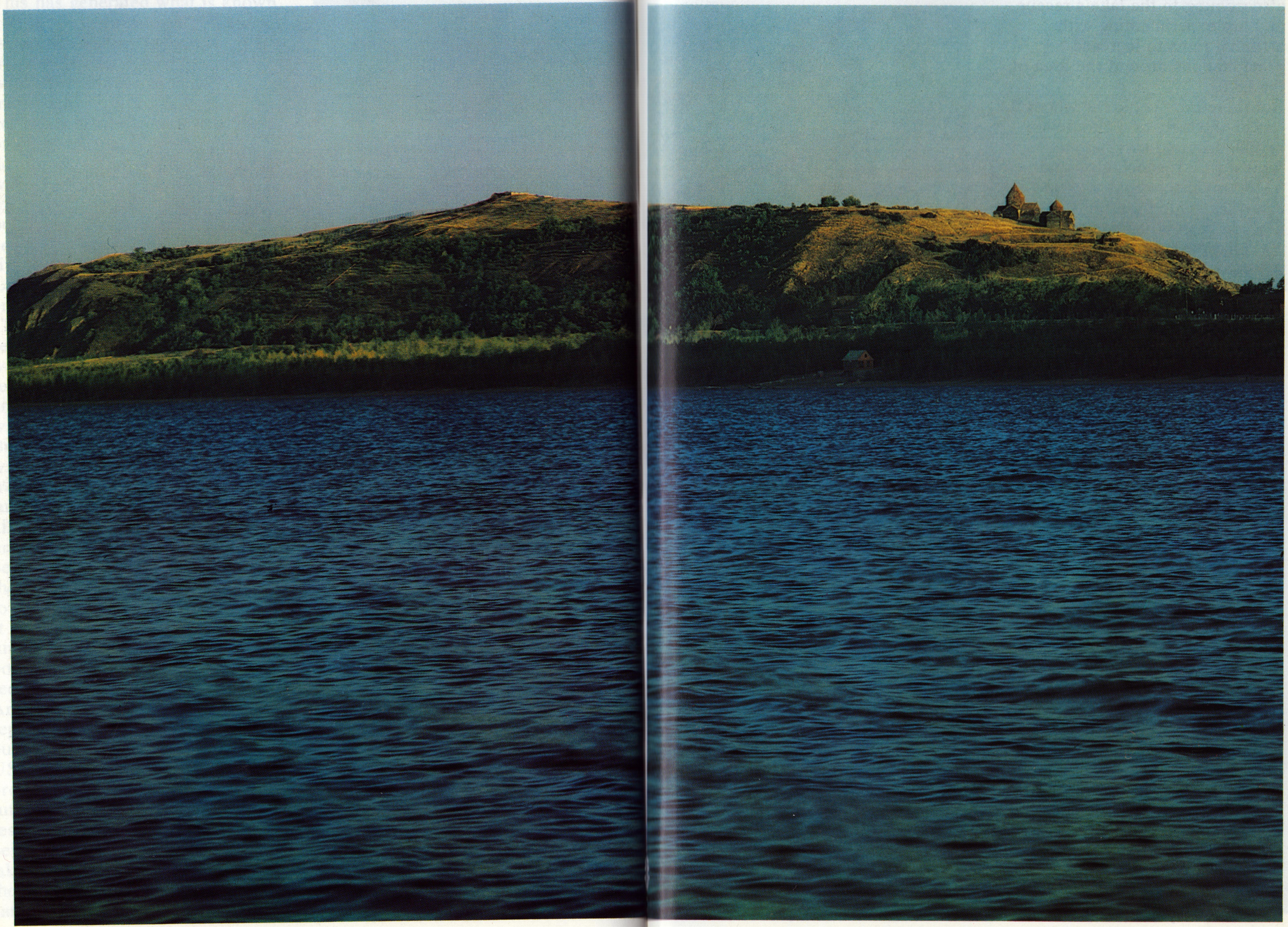
This was how the Sevan-Razdan series of electric power stations was built. It provided the republic's industry with electricity and the arid Ararat Valley with water.

But nothing lasts forever. The waters of Sevan gradually receded from their shores and the lake's surface shrank by 420 square kilometres. Its very existence was imperiled. Sevan had served the people well for many years, now the time had come for the people to show their concern for it.

It was decided that a gigantic tunnel was to be cut through the powerful Vardenis Range to redirect the waters of the river Arpa, 48 kilometres away, to replenish the lake. This tunnel was built in 1981. On top of this the USSR government has adopted a project to preserve Lake Sevan for future generations. Large reservoirs are being built, trees are being planted on the shores of the lake to scale down evaporation and the area has been proclaimed a national park. Geophysicists are

Environs of Tsakhkadzor in winter

Overleaf
A view of the Sevan Peninsula



also coming to the lake's rescue, and are experimenting with artificial rains to increase precipitations around the area of the lake.

But there are people for whom the receding waters of Lake Sevan revealed untold surprises and treasures. Archaeologists and historians discovered ancient rock drawings made by primitive man, household utensils, weapons, and war chariots from Urartu times. All these discoveries can be seen in the history museum in Yerevan.

But to return to the lake. Its length, before it started to recede, was 75 kilometres, and its greatest width—56 kilometres. The air is pure and transparent and there are no more than 19 cloudy days a year here (the famous resorts in Kislovodsk and Yalta have, respectively, 122 and 54). The average temperature of Sevan's water in summer is +18-19° C and up to +20-22° C in the afternoon when there is no wind.

Akhtamar monument on the shore of Lake Sevan

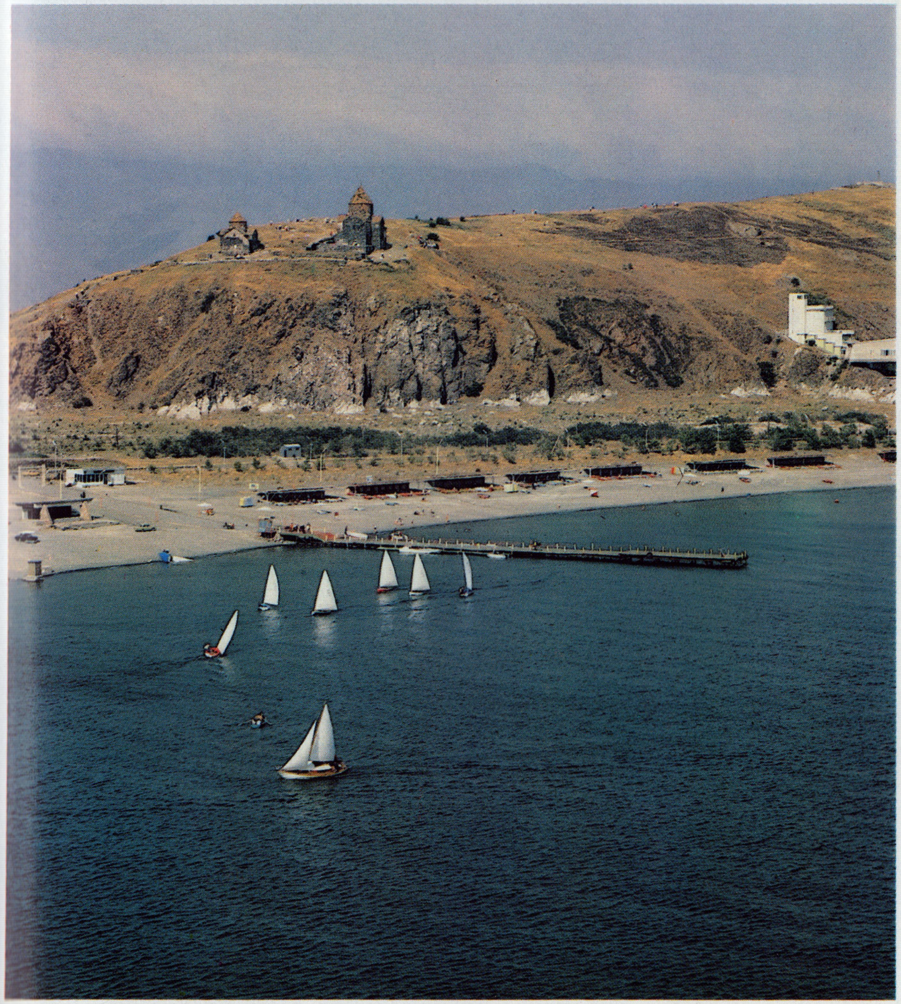
Lake Sevan

Sevan Monastery. 874

Sevan is a popular holiday resort. The pure air and sandy beaches attract holiday-makers by the thousands. Besides, Sevan has always been famous for its fish, especially trout, a fish which graced many great lords' tables in times of old. Small wonder the trout was part of the tribute Armenia paid to its conquerors. The Armenians call the trout *ishkhan* which means "prince-fish" because of the little dots which make it look as though it is wearing a crown. Gourmets say the fish is especially tasty if it is cooked in water from Sevan. Like other parts of Armenia, the Sevan area has many historical sites of great interest. Among the most interesting is the **monastery** on the rocky peninsula jutting out into Sevan. One of the churches, named Arakelots (the Apostles) is made of rough-hewn weather-beaten slabs. The other church, Astvatsatsin, is larger and of finer workmanship. The Sevan Monastery was founded in 874 by King Ashot I, the founder of the Bagratid Dynasty, and his daughter Mariam. Before the lake began to shrink, the peninsula was an island and the water of the lake saved the monastery on many occasions from the onslaught of enemies. There is a legend saying that the Arabs once tried to capture the island, but a storm of immense ferocity arose on the lake and the boats were all destroyed, together with the warriors they carried. Even today Sevan shows its temper in bad weather. The waves beating on-shore may be as high as two metres.

There are swift comfortable hydrofoils which make regular runs on the lake. Tourists are welcome at the *Akhtamar* Hotel, at a camping site for travellers with cars, and the *Intourist* Motel, which offer tourists all kinds of services, and also cafés and restaurants.

The *Intourist* Motel



The shore of Lake Sevan

BEYOND THE MOUNTAIN PASS

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN ARMENIA

As the road beckons, turn back for another glance at the lake splashing among the clouds and you will think you are leaving behind a marvelous blue fairy-tale. The highway rises higher and higher till it reaches Tsovagyukh, a big village with a good school, community centre and comfortable homes. The pride of the village is a monument to the classical Armenian writer Grigor Muratsan (1854-1908).

Here the clouds seem to touch the alpine meadows and you can almost hear the silence, broken only by the buzzing of bees. Next on the road is Semyonovka, a village inhabited by Russian farmers whose ancestors settled here in the early 19th century and found a second home in Armenia.

A bit beyond Semyonovka, at the highest point of the Sevan Pass—2,114 metres above sea level—the highway descends to what is like a little corner of paradise on earth. There are no other words to describe this beautiful rolling valley framed by the mountains of the Lesser Caucasus. This is **Dilizhan,** one of the best resort towns of Armenia.

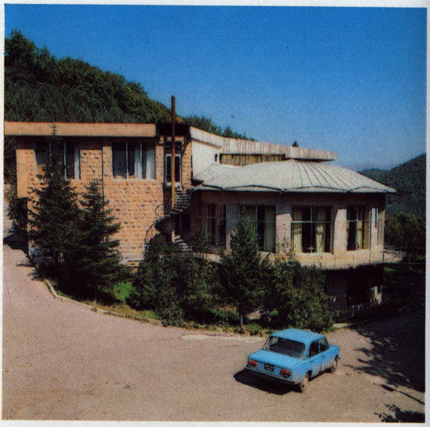
Dilizhan has a mild climate with a moderately cool summer and a warm and sunny winter, air heady with ozone, and mineral springs which are said to be as health-giving as the waters of Vichy in France. Because of all these qualities Dilizhan works miracles with people who come here for treatment and rest.

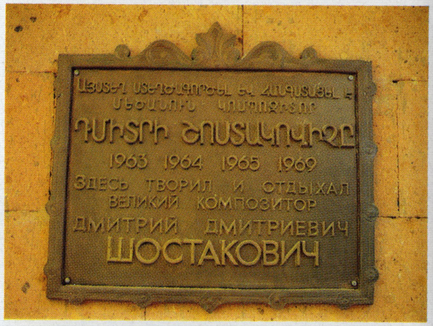
There are several health and holiday facilities here for adults and children.

The descent from Sevan Pass

Overleaf
Dilizhan

Dilizhan. The USSR Composers' Union holiday hotel

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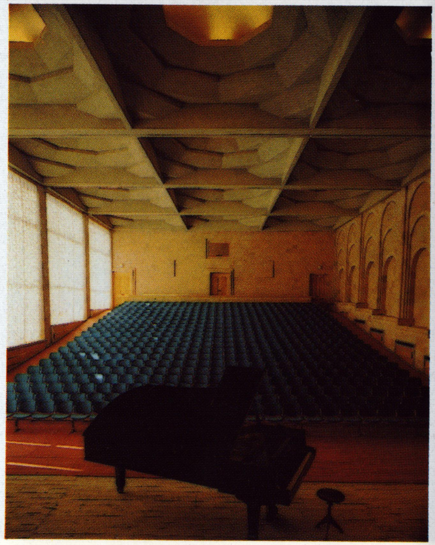
1963 1964 1965 1969
ЗДЕСЬ ТВОРИЛ И ОТДЫХАЛ
ВЕЛИКИЙ КОМПОЗИТОР
ДМИТРИЙ ДМИТРИЕВИЧ
ШОСТАКОВИЧ

The concert hall



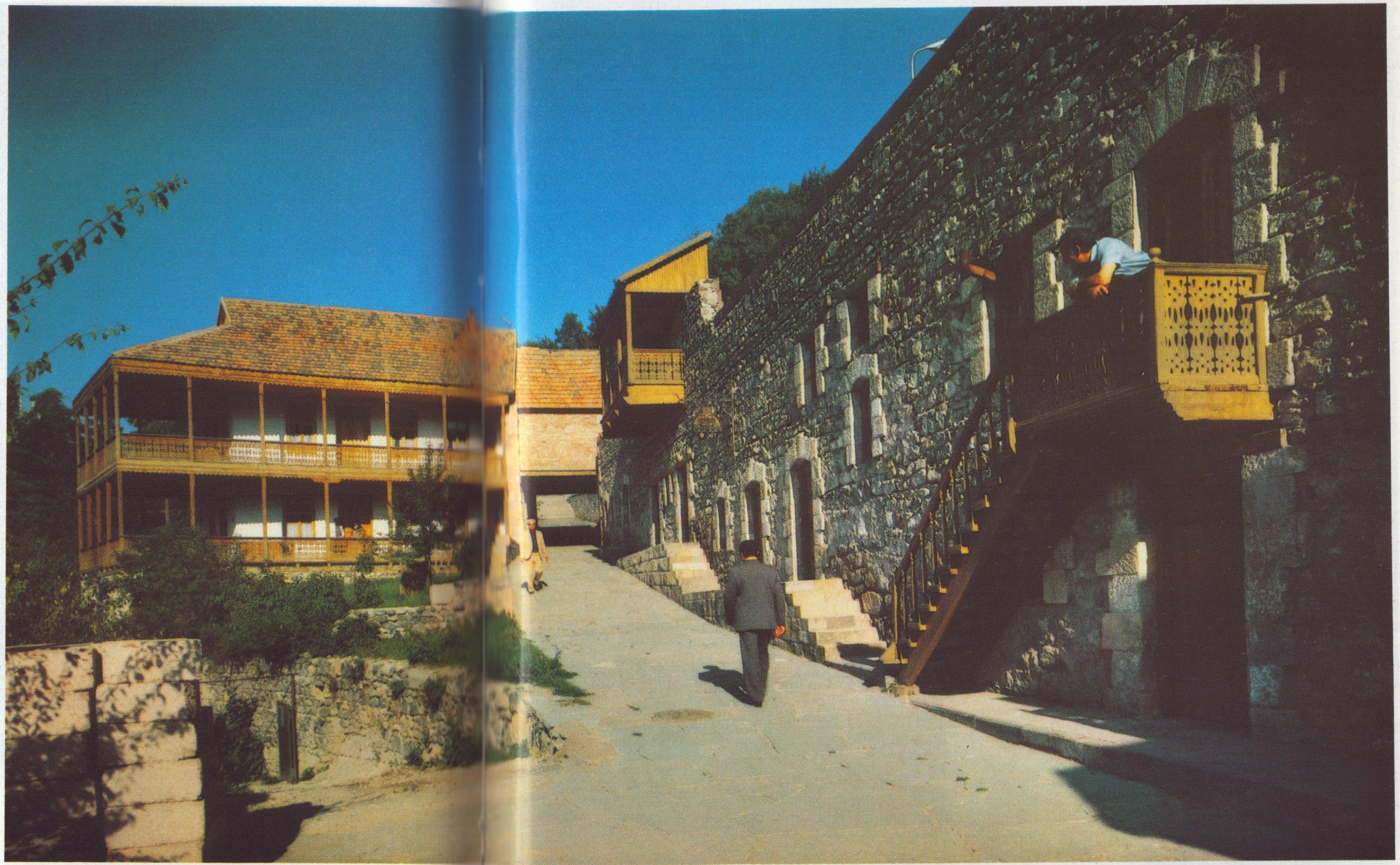
Dmitry Shostakovich, the composer, used to come to Dilizhan for holidays. It was here that he composed two quartets, and music for the film version of *Hamlet* along with other pieces. Other celebrities who have visited the composers' holiday hotel in Dilizhan were Aram Khachaturyan, Benjamin Britten and Arno Babadzhanyan.

For those who are interested in history and medieval architecture, Dilizhan holds quite a few attractions. One of them is the **Agartsin Monastery** (10th-13th centuries). It is to be found about seven kilometres up a stream which falls into the Agstev River to the northwest of the town.

The monastery may be described as a school of architecture. It took about 300 years to build with every generation of architects adding on new structures so tactfully that they enhanced and blended with the design of their predecessors and the natural surroundings.

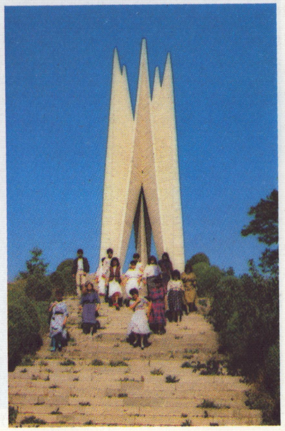
The **Church of St. Gregory** (10th century) was the earliest structure to be built in the monastery and it is striking for its wealth of architectural elements and its bas-reliefs. The **Church of St. Stepanos** was built in 1244. Its forms are in many ways repeated in the **Cathedral of the Mother of God** (1281)—the main structure of the monastery, a classical Armenian pendentive with elaborate and intricate ornaments.

The **refectory** (1248) is believed to be the most original building in the Agartsin Monastery, and is counted among the best specimens of lay architecture of the Middle

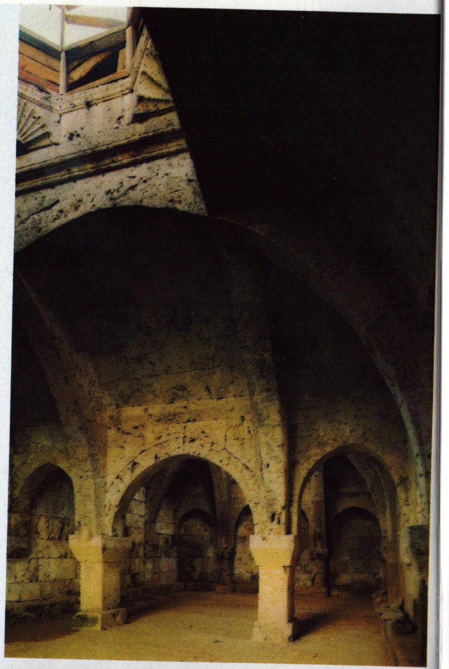


Dilizhan. In the old town

The USSR Filmmakers' Union holiday hotel

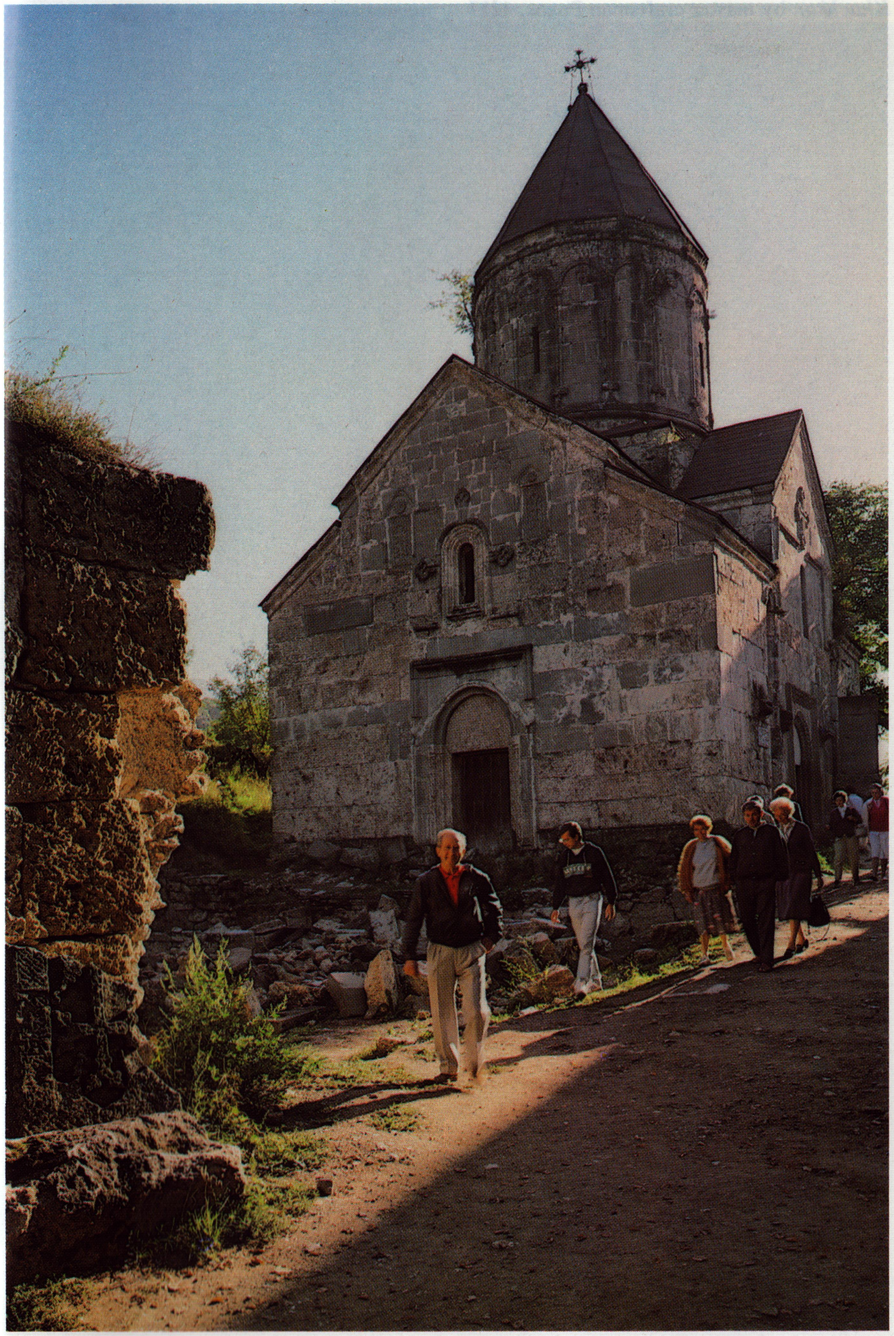


Obelisk at the approaches to Dilizhan



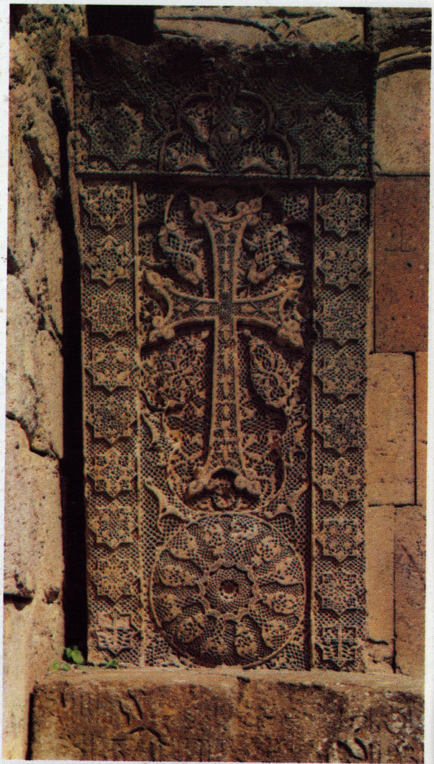
The refectory in the Agartsin Monastery

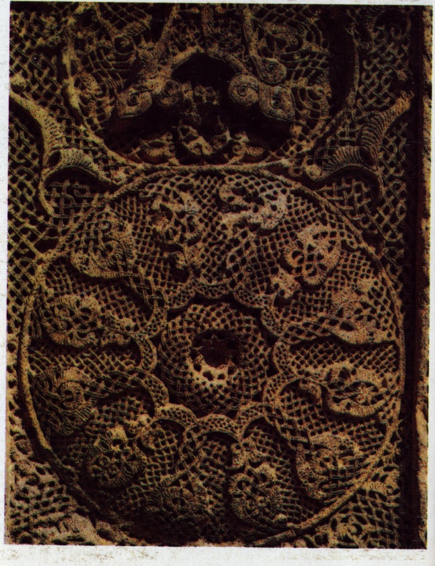
Agartsin Monastery. 10th-13th centuries



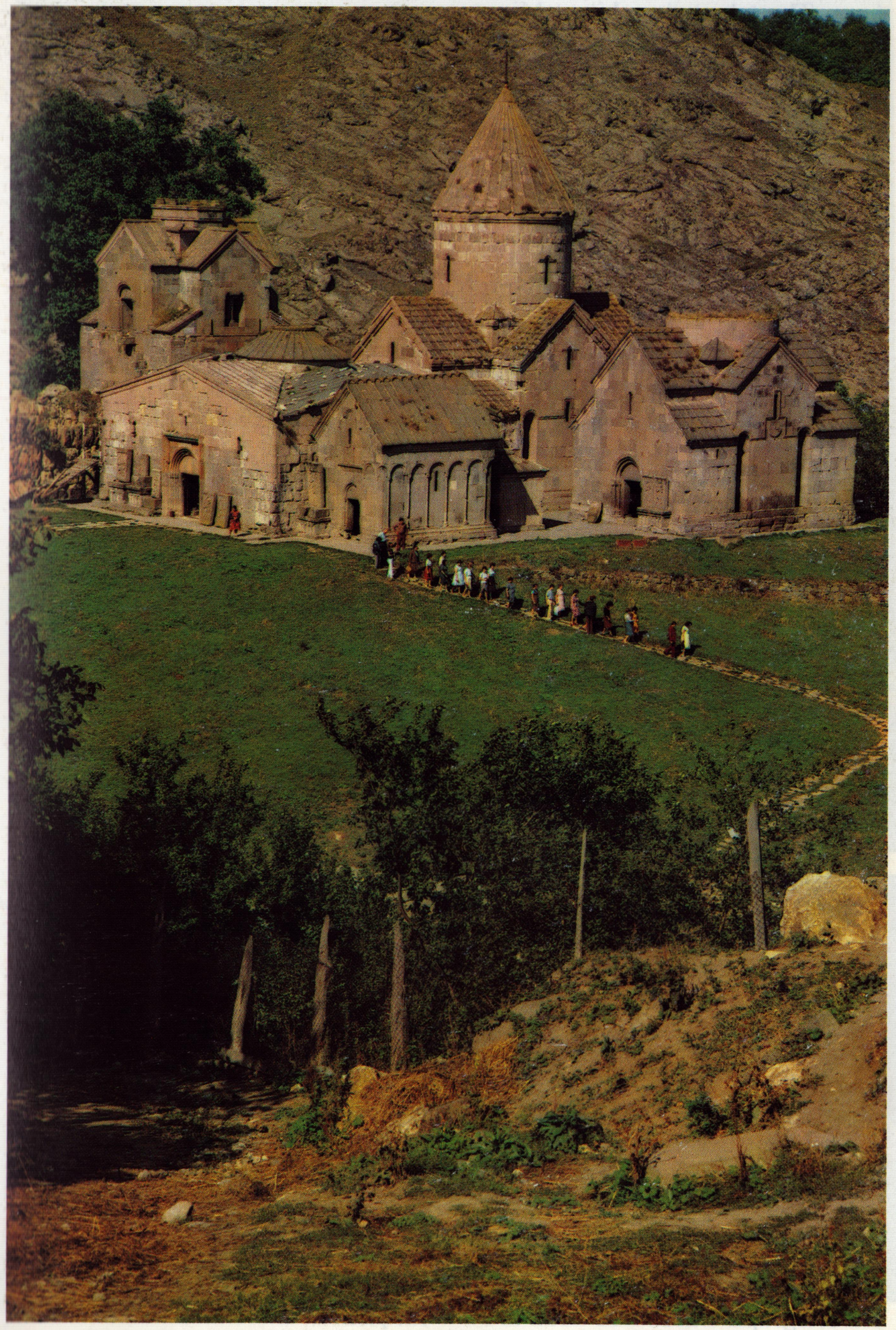
Khachkar by master craftsman Pogos. 1237

Khachkar. Detail





Goshavank Monastery. 12th-13th centuries



Ages. The talented architect Minas managed to make the 20-metre-long hall look enormous and its comparatively low ceiling look high because of its cross vaulting. The refectory was intended for receiving visitors and pilgrims. Many centuries have passed since the noise of the chisel on stone was first heard in these remote parts. The grandeur of Agartsin is now a thing of the past, but once you see this creation of the human spirit and hands, it will stay with you for the rest of your life.

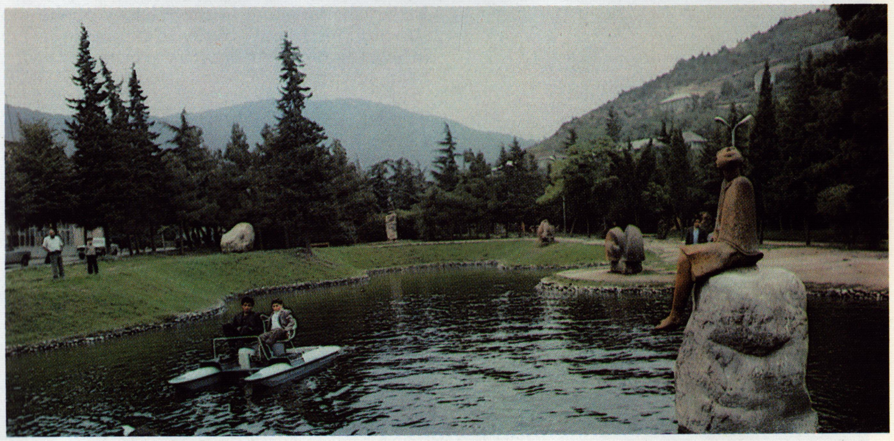
Another **monastery, Nor Getik** or Goshavank, is situated to the east of Lake Parzlich, 10 kilometres away from Dilizhan. It was named in honour of its founder, the great medieval scholar and writer Mhitar Gosh (1120-1213).

And 35 kilometres down the Agstev Valley from Dilizhan brings us to **Idzhevan** where a trade route used to pass in olden times. No doubt that is why "idzhevan" means "inn" in Armenian. These were the "gates" of Armenia. Caravans loaded with the riches of the Orient found a welcome rest here. Travellers approaching the town today will spot from afar the high-rise hotel among the mountains.

Idzhevan has merited a special place in Armenia's new history. It was here that the armed uprising against the bourgeois Dashnak government began in November 1920. And it was from here that the revolutionary committee of Armenia informed Vladimir Lenin that Soviet government had been made secure in the republic. The old telegraph which was used to

Idzhevan. Entrance to the *Makaravank* Camping Site

A corner of Idzhevan

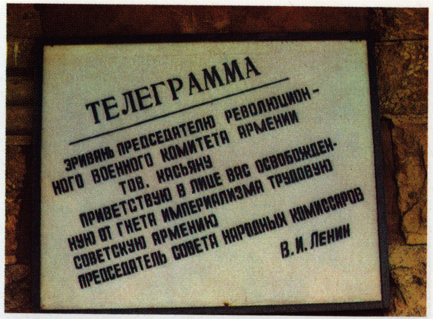


The park

cable the historic text to Moscow is now on display in the town's history museum.

As in all the towns of Armenia, great changes have taken place in Idzhevan in Soviet times. Today it is a leading producer of carpets in Transcaucasia. The Idzhevan Carpet Factory puts out about one million square metres of carpeting a year. Besides this, the town has a lumber mill and a bentonite factory.

The Idzhevan Region is also famed for its grapes, fruit and high quality tobacco. The mountain rivers have been used to build several large water reservoirs and a ramified irrigation network.



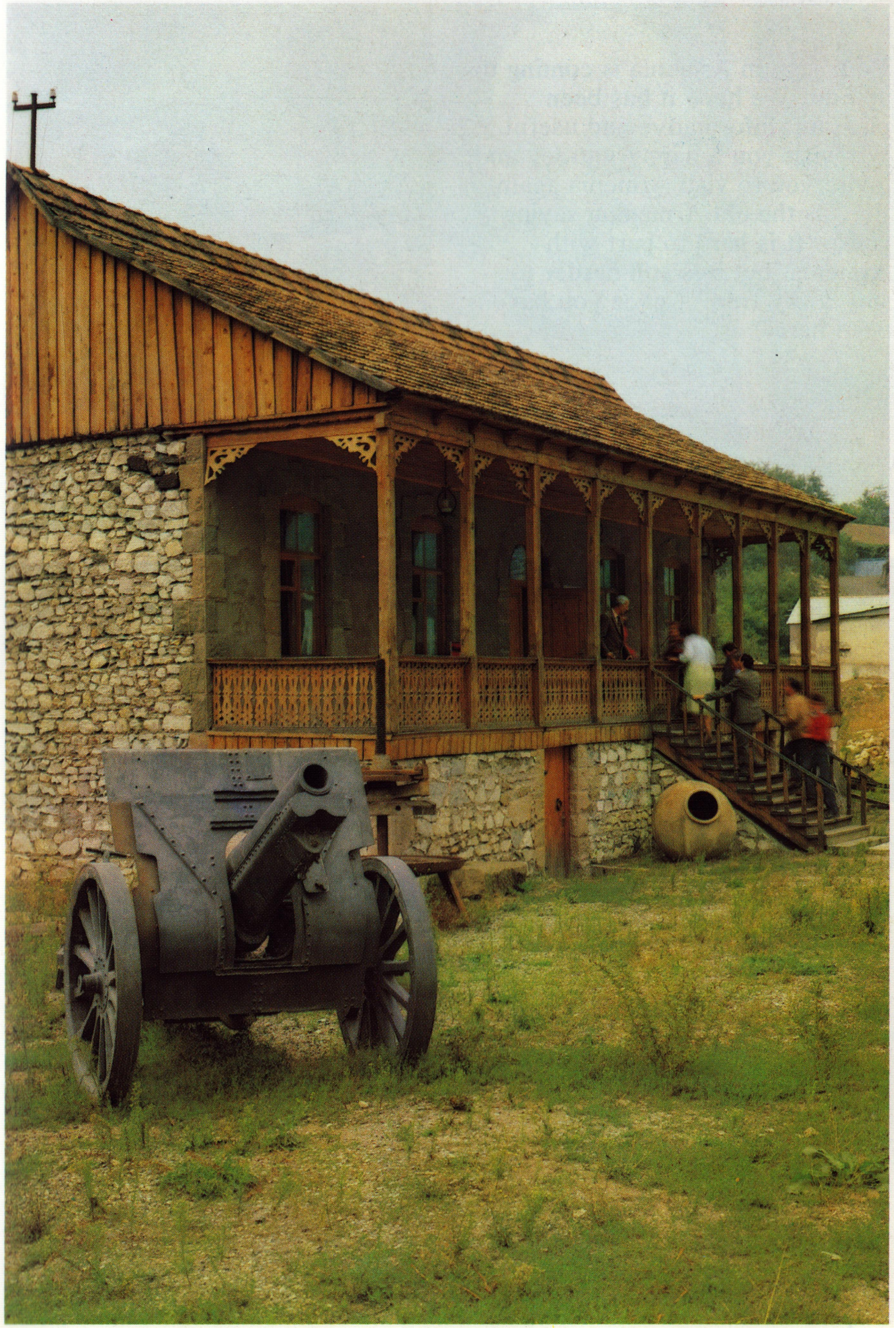
ТЕЛЕГРАММА

ЭРИВАНЬ ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЮ РЕВОЛЮЦИОН-
НОГО ВОЕННОГО КОМИТЕТА АРМЕНИИ
ТОВ. КАСЬЯНУ
ПРИВЕТСТВУЮ В ЛИЦЕ ВАС ОСВОБОЖДЕН-
НУЮ ОТ ГНЕТА ИМПЕРИАЛИЗМА ТРУДОВУЮ
СОВЕТСКУЮ АРМЕНИЮ
ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЬ СОВЕТА НАРОДНЫХ КОМИССАРОВ
В.И. ЛЕНИН

Idzhevan. Museum of the History of the Revolution. Lenin's reply to the cable informing him that Soviet government had been secured in Armenia. December 2, 1920

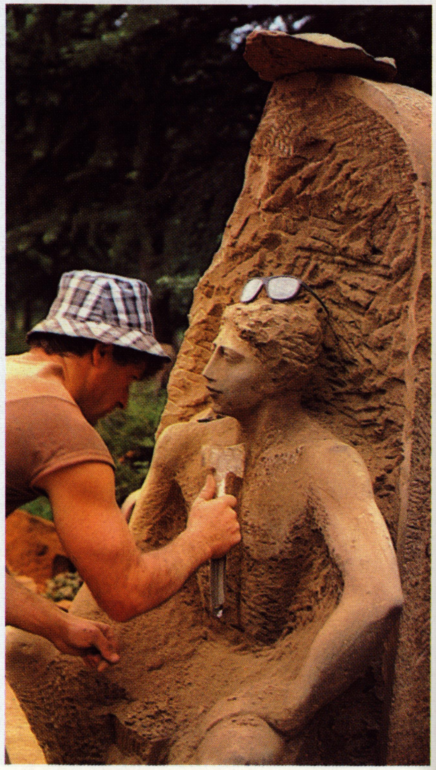
The telegraph which relayed the message to Lenin

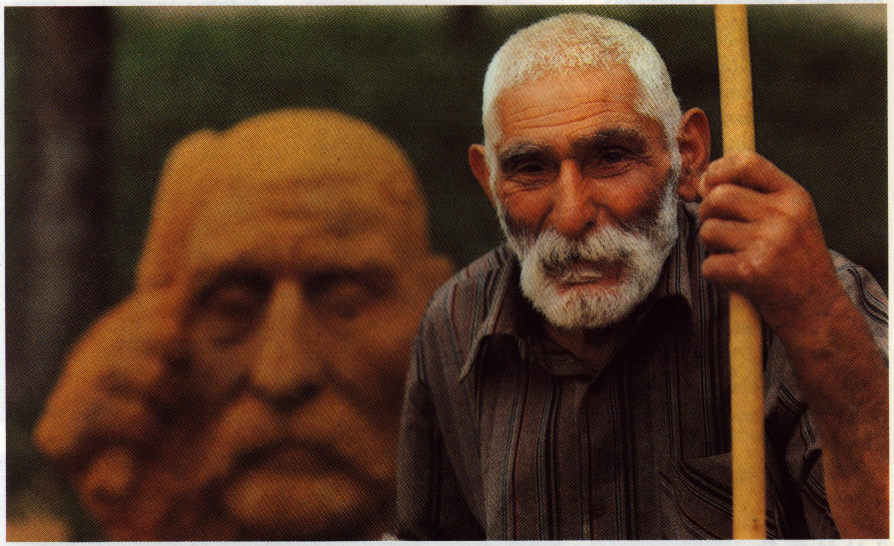
The museum exterior



* * *

Your stay in Armenia is coming to an end. We hope it has been pleasant, informative and useful. We wish you a happy journey and invite you to visit Armenia again. For, as the old Armenian saying goes: "It is hard to part with Armenia, but it is still harder to stay away from it once you have been here".





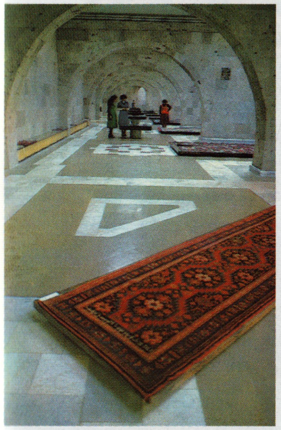
Idzhevan. The international symposium of sculptors

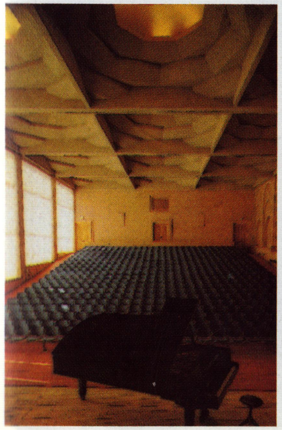
Hotels

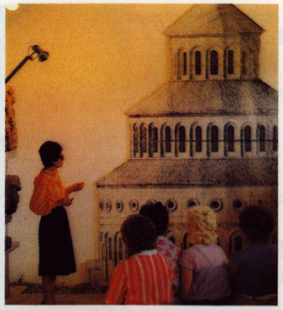
Ani—19 Sayat-Nova Avenue
Arabkir—54 Komitas St.
Armenia—1 Amiryan St.
Dvin—40 Paronyan St.
Erebuni—Lenin Square
Nairi—252 Amaranotsain St.
Sevan—8 Shahumyan St.
Tsitsernak International Tourist Complex—3rd St., Nork
Yerevan—14 Abovyan St.
The Youth Palace Hotel—1 Komeritakan St.

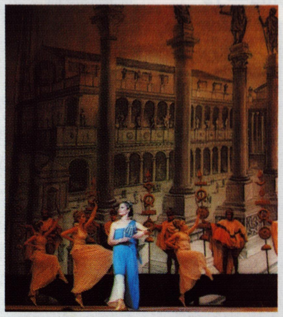
Theatres and Concert Halls

The Spendiarov Opera House—36 Tumanyan St.
The Sundukyan Drama Theatre—6 Karmir Banaki St.
The Stanislavsky Russian Drama Theatre—7 Abovyan St.
The Yerevan Drama Theatre—28 Isaakyan St.
The Dzhabarly Azerbaijan Drama Theatre—19 Zaryan St.
The Young Spectator's Theatre—3 Moskovyan St.
The Tumanyan Puppet Theatre—4 Sayat-Nova Avenue
The Experimental Young People's Theatre—22 Tumanyan St.
The Khachaturyan Concert Hall—46 Lenin Avenue
The Lesser Hall of the Philharmonic Society—2 Abovyan St.
The House of Chamber Music—Koltsevoi (Ring) Boulevard
The Circus—5 26 Komisarneri St.
The Sports and Concert Complex in *Tsitsernakaberd* Park—1 Leningradyan St.







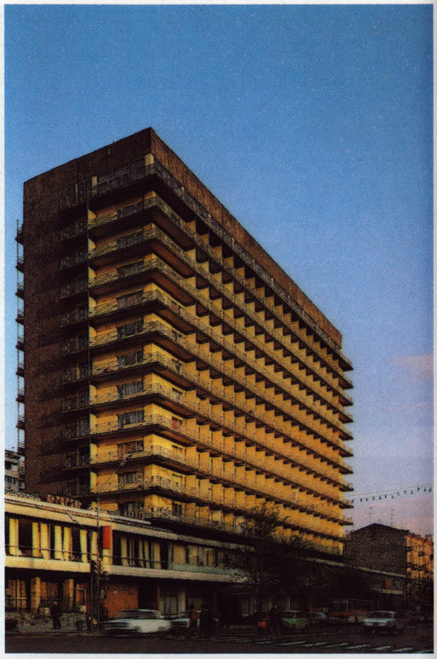


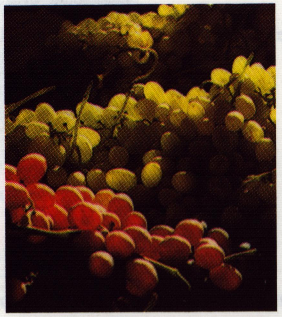
Telephone Numbers You Might Find Useful

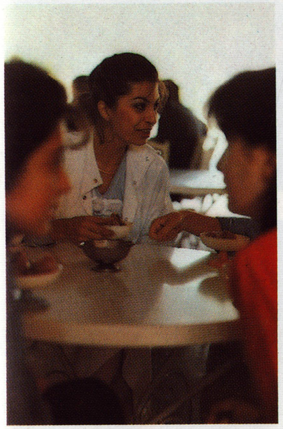
Information—09
Aeroflot Information Desk—007
Railway Information Office—004
The time—10
Foreign Tourist Agency—56 06 85
Intourist Branch in Yerevan—52 53 73
The Armenian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries—56 45 14
Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad—52 55 80
The Republican Council for Tourism and Excursions—56 16 21
The Republican Peace Committee—52 63 83
Committee of Youth Organizations—53 34 21
The Committee for Assisting Repatriated Armenians—52 56 41
Sputnik International Youth Tourist Bureau—53 34 32
The *Tsitsernak* International Youth Holiday Camp—65 20 80
The Council for Armenian Church Affairs—56 46 34

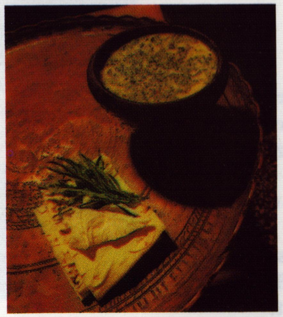
Museums and Exhibitions

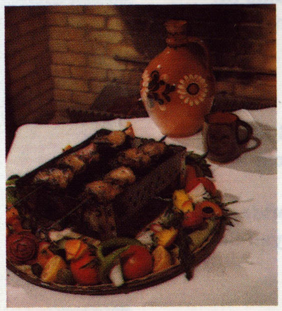
Museum of the Revolution of the Armenian SSR—Lenin Square
Museum of the History of Armenia—Lenin Square
The Art Gallery of Armenia—1 Spandaryan St.
Museum of the History of Yerevan—12 Lenin Avenue
Erebuni Museum—38 Erebuni St.
Museum of Soviet Armenia in the Great Patriotic War—*Akhtanak* Park
Museum of the Nature of Armenia—12 Lenin Avenue
The Charents Museum of Literature and Arts—1 Spandaryan St.
The Children's Picture Gallery—13 Abovyan St.
The Museum of Folk Art of Armenia—64 Abovyan St.
The Karapetyan Museum of Geology—10 Abovyan St.
House Museum of Khachatur Abovyan—4 2nd St., Kanaker
House Museum of Ovanes Tumanyan—40 Moskovyan St.
House Museum of Avetik Isaakyan—20 Plekhanov St.
House Museum of Alexander Spendiarov—21 Nalbandyan St.
House Museum of Martiros Saryan—3 Saryan St.
House Museum of Aram Khachaturyan—8 Plekhanov St.
The Ervand Kochar Museum—39 Lenin Avenue
The Egishe Charents Memorial Home—17 Lenin Avenue
The Derenik Demirchyan Memorial Home—29 Abovyan St.
Exhibition of National Economic Achievements of the Armenian SSR—43 Shiraki St.

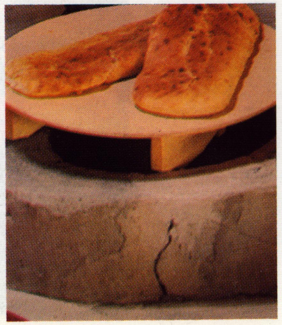












Restaurants

Ani—19 Sayat-Nova Avenue
Ararat—3 Sverdlov St.
Argishti—18 Lenin Avenue
Armenia—1 Amiryan St.
Dvin—40 Paronyan St.
Erebuni—Lenin Square
Praga—54b Komitas St.
Sevan—8 Marx St.
Yerevan—14 Abovyan St.

Cafés

Ani—19 Sayat-Nova St.
Armenia—Lenin Square
Dvin—40 Proshyan St.
Dyer-Shopron—22 Isaakyan St.
Flora—Koltsevoi Boulevard
Tourist—1 Pushkin St.
Vernatun—1 Pushkin St.

Cinemas

Airenik—38 Ordzhonikidze Avenue
Aragats—18 Alabyan St.
Gegard—7th St., Avan
Komitas—45 Komitas St.
Moskva—18 Abovyan St.
Nairi—50 Lenin Avenue
Pioneer—19 Teryan St.
Razdan—8 Kievyan St.
Rossia—43 Marx St.
Sevan—47 Kalinin St.
Yerevan—6 Oktemberyan Avenue
Zwartnots—6 Azatutyan Avenue

Sports Facilities

The Sports and Concert Complex—1 Leningradyan St., *Tsitsernakaberd* Park
The *Razdan* Stadium—The Razdan Embankment
The *Respublikansky* Stadium—65 Knunyants St.
The *Nairi* Stadium—2 Tamantsineri St.
The Cycling Track—4 Karmir Banaki St.
The Hippodrome—41 Shiraki St.
The *Dynamo* Gym—69 Knunyants St.
The Central Chess Club—1 Lermontov St.

Trade Centres

The State Department Store—8 Marx St.
The Leninsky District Department Store—55 Ordzhonikidze Avenue
The *Detsky Mir* (Children's World) Department Store—32 Spandaryan St.

Jewellery Stores

Manushak—13 Tamantsineri St.
Onyx—45 Oktemberyan Avenue
Ureni—21 Abovyan St.
Records and cameras—8 Sayat-Nova Avenue
Footwear—4 Knunyants St.
Musical instruments—10 Sayat-Nova Avenue
Sports gear—5 Lenin Avenue
Tourist gear—20 Oktemberyan Avenue
Spare parts for cars—22 Acharyan St.
Miscellanea—24 Tumanyan St.

Shops Trading in Foreign Currency

Tsitsernak—8 Sayat-Nova Avenue
Souvenir—3 Amiryan St.

EREVAN ԵՐԵՎԱՆ

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По Закавказью
ТУРИСТСКИЕ ЦЕНТРЫ
АРМЕНИИ

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